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HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF AFGHANISTAN

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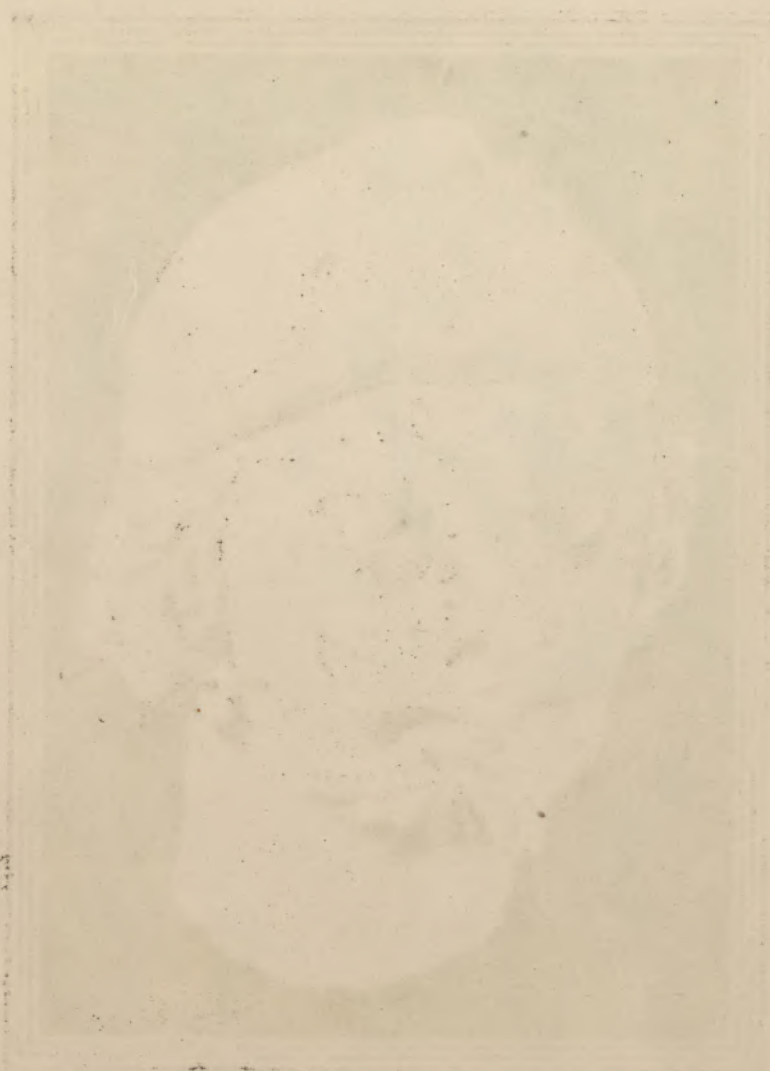
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OR ANCIENT AFGHANISTAN
Mohammad Ali



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OR ANCIENT AFGHANISTAN

By General Sir



No. 47

**HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF AFGHANISTAN**

ARYANA

or

ANCIENT AFGHANISTAN

By

Mohammad Ali

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PREFACE

Very little is known about the ancient history of Afghanistan. This lack of adequate literature on the subject has created many misunderstandings and false notions. Some even think that the country had no political entity before the advent of Islam; while others have looked upon it as a "Country of Dream and a "Land of Romance". It is with a view to dispel these false notions and to rescue the past history of the country from oblivion that the present volume is offered to the public.

Afghanistan has a glorious past. Its rich archaeological remains prove the part played by her in the development of human thought and culture. The remains of Bamian will undoubtedly rank as wonders in celebrity with the Rock Temples of India at Ajanta or the Pyramids of Egypt.

The history of its past civilization goes back to at least five thousand years. Afghanistan was a seat of culture at a time when Egypt and Babylonia were serving the cause of human thought and art. Balkh (Bakhti of the old) can boast of having been one of the great centres of ancient civilization. It was from here that the Aryan culture found its way into the adjacent countries. And again it was here that Zoroaster for the first time preached his religion, which later on became the state religion of Persia for many centuries. Similalry India, in the field of culture and religion, is indebted to this country.

Situated as it is in the heart of Asia, Afghanistan naturally became, even in those distant ages, the meeting ground of at least

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four great civilizations of the world-Aryan(or Bactrian), Greek, Iranian and Buddhist. The result was the birth of a hybrid culture that found its expression in different schools of arts, employing a technique unquestionably borrowed from the foreigners, but modified and moulded according to local requirements. Greek influence first found its way into the Bactrian art, and then the Graeco-Bactrian art found its way into the Buddhist Art and a new School of Art came into being known to the historian by the name of Gandhara School or Graeco-Buddhist School of Gandhara.

My second object in publishing this book is an attempt to foster goodwill and strengthen cultural relations between Afghanistan and her neighbours that share with her the legacy of her past glories. Recent developments throughout the world have demonstrated that the greatest need of the present age is better understanding and co-operation among the nations of the world, especially among neighbours.

I have to acknowledge the very great obligation I owe to the authors of the various publications, that have been of immense use to me in writing this book. To cite all the authorities consulted in this connection would be a cumbrous task. Of these mention may be made of two books in Persian one entitled "Aryana" by Dr. Najibullah Khan and the second "Afghanistan" by Mr. Ahmad Ali Kohzad, Curator of the Kabul Museum and President of the Historical Society.

I have also to thank my friends and colleagues Mir Amanuddin Ansary, Dean of the Faculty of Letters and the late Dr. P.P. Bushnell, Principal of the Habibia College Kabul, for many valuable suggestions.

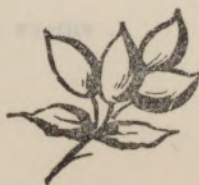
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Kabul.

Mohammed Ali

January

1957



ARYANA

OR ANCIENT AFGHANISTAN

By

Mohamad Ali

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

SITUATION BOUNDARIES :- The term Afghanistan-the land of the Afghans was applied to the country for the first time during the reign of Ahmad Shah Durrani (1747.1773 A. D.). Previously it was known by the names of Aryana, Pactia, Khurassan, Pashtunkhwah and Roh. Ahmad Shah in his poems refers to it as Pushtunkhwah, that is the land of the Pashtuns. Roh is an obsolete word signifying a mountain and it was applied to the southeastern portion of the country which is mainly mountainous. Pactia is used by Herodotus, the well-known Greek historian of the 5th century B. C.; while most of the classical writers call it by the names of Aryana, Ariana, Airya, or Airyana, that is the land of the Aryans, Khurassan-the land of the rising sun-is the term used by the early Musly writers to the country lying east of Persia.

It is rather difficult to fix the limits of this country either in the past or in modern times. To some of these writers it extended from the Oxus to the Indus, while others contend that it included all the lands between the Jaxartes and the Indus and comprised the following provinces:

(1) Bakhdi (Balhika, Bakhtrish or Bactria)... modern Balkh or the province of Mazar-i-Sharif.

(2) Aeria (Aria, Haravia or Haravia)..... modern Herat.

(2)

(3) Sogdiana (Soghdonia, Tranoxiana or Mawarunahr) . .
Bukhara and Samargand.

(4) Margu (Margiana) Morghab walley.

(5) Tukharaistan modern provinces of Kataghan
and Badakhshan.

(6) Gandhara the countries of the lower Kabul valley,
including the districts of Nangrahar
(modern Jalalabad), Peshawar, Swat
and Charsadda.

(7) Paropamisus (Paropamisadae, Capisia or Capesene) modern
Koh Daman, Capisa or Parwan.

(8) Arachosia (Arakotia, Arakozi or Harhañvaiti) modern
Kandahar.

(9) Gedrosia modern Baluchistan.

(10) Zaranka (Drangiana. Saksatan, Sakastene or Sajistan)
modern Seistan.

(11) Parthia the land lying between the Caspian Sea
and Herat.

(12) Mekran modern Kirman.

Even in modrn age (beginnig of the 19th century) it extended sixteen degress in longitude, frome Sirhind, about one hundred and fifty miles from Delhi, to Meshad; about an equal distante from the Caspian Sea. In breadth it reached from the Oxus to the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea, a space including sixteen derees of latiude, or over nine hundred miles.

But this vast country has, of late, suffered considerable diminution in size, with the result that it now extends from the west of Herat in longitude $60^{\circ} 30'$, to the western boundary of Sinkiang, in longitude 75° east, and from the Oxus, in latitude $38^{\circ} 30'$ to the north of Baluchistan, in latitude $29^{\circ} 30'$ north.

It is bounded on the east by the *sub-continent of Hindustan (Pakhtounistan Pakistan and Indid)*, on the north by Russian Turkestan (old kingdoms of Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva), on the south by Baluchistan, and on the west by Persia (modern Iran). Its greatest length from east to west is about 700 miles while its greatest breadth from north to south is nearly 500 miles. The total area aggregates 270,000 square miles.

PHYSICAL FEATURES: Afghanistan is an elevated table-land; general elevation is over 4000 feet. The north-eastern and central portions of the country form a plateau with an average height of 6000 feet, and with the Hindu Kush as its backbone. On all sides the plateau descends abruptly to lowlands, save in the north-east, where it rises to the lofty Pamirs, more generally known as the "Roof of the World." To the south lies the arid land called Seistan and Registan, average height being 1600 feet. Towards the north it slopes away into the depressed tract bordering the Amu-a vast plain of loess. Eastwards there is a sudden drop into the Indus basin,

The country is mostly mountainous and is largely covered by a series of ranges running in all directions, but generally from north-east to south-west. The central range, Hindu Kush (Parapomismus of the old) takes its source from the Pamir, and passing through the heart of the country ultimately dwindles away into the steppes and Namaksars (salt-deserts) north of Herat, where they meet the line of the Elburz coming from the opposite direction.

The Hindu Kush, though a great obstacle, is no effective barrier in a military or commercial sense, for it is notched by a series of passes, though high and difficult, yet from time immemorial, have been used by invaders, traders, pilgrims and travellers, and were also the chief trade routes between India and the central Asian countries. The most important of these passes are: Kilik (15,600 ft.), Wakjir (16,150 ft.), Mingatake (15,430 ft.), Broghil (12,460 ft.), Kachin (18,500 ft.), Sar Ishtrag (17,450 ft.), Agram (16,630 ft.), Afsik (12,300 ft.), Afsik (12,340 ft.), Durah (14,800 ft.), Khawak (11,640 ft.), Khoknol (11,450 ft.), Til (11,640 ft.), Salang-Bajgah (12,300 ft.), Kao-

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shan 14,340 ft.) Chardar (12,300 ft.), Bamian (8,900 ft., Akrobat-Pelu (10,250 ft.) and Dandenshikan (8,830 ft.).

The second important range goes by the name of Sulaiman. This range, though inferior in height to that of Hindu Kush, has snow on its summits through the greater part of the year. This mountain system serves as a barrier between the Indus basin and the highlands of Afghanistan. It, too, is pierced at many places by passes across which invading hordes have poured in all ages to take possession of the fertile valleys below. They have also been the chief commercial links between India and Afghanistan from ancient time to this day. Most of these passes have been formed by the valleys of the rivers flowing towards the Indus, and are generally named after these tributaries. The most famous among these, which have frequently been trodden, are: the Khyber, The Peiwar, the Tochi, the Gomal and the Khojak-Bolan.

Besides there are some minor routes from Jalalabad to Bajaur and Swat via the Kunar valley. Alexander the great, during his march on India, made use of these routes.

RIVERS: Afghanistan, though well-watered, has few large rivers for a country of such a size. With the exception of the Amu (Oxus) in the extreme north, which forms the natural boundary between Afghanistan and Russian Turkestan, there is no river in the whole country which is not fordable throughout its course for the greater part of the year.

The rivers of the country can easily be divided into three categories:

(1) Those that flow to the north and ultimately disappear in the limitless oases of Central Asia. The Amu or Oxus (old names: Wehroth, Kui-shu, Amuyah and Jaihun), the Kokcha, the Kunduz, the Murghab and the Hari Rud (Arius of the classical writers) are the chief rivers of this group.

(2) Rivers that take their waters to the Indus, such as the Kabul (Kubha or Cophen of Alexander), the Kurram (Krumu), the Gomal (Gomati) and the Kunar or Kashkar.

(3) Rivers that empty their waters into the Seistan Lakes. Chief rivers of this category are: The Helmand, Heirmand or Hilmand (Etymander, Etymandoros, Erymanthus and Haetumat of the Greek writers), the Arghandab, the Khashrud, the Harut and the Farah Rud.

CLIMATE. The climate of the country, generally speaking, is cold in winter, hot and dry in summer. Judging from the physique, strength and activities of its inhabitants, one should pronounce the climate on the whole bracing and favourable to human constitution.

Aryana's Place, in History: Aryana has behind it a long and glorious past, and for centuries held the banner of civilization in the heart of Asia. From dim and distant past it has played an important rôle in the development of human thought and culture. It was here that two of the great and oldest religions of the world Brahmanism and Zoroastrianism originated, and two of the most important literary monuments, that is the Rigveda and the Avesta, came into being. From the very dawn of history Aryana has held a key position in the politics and strategy of Central Asia. It was Aryana that for centuries served as a bulwark for the adjacent countries, holding out successfully against the encroachments of non-Aryana elements, that were trying to reach the fertile and rich plains of India on one side and the beautiful valleys of the west on the other.

Aryana was also an important economic factor of Asia even in those early days. It was a great commercial link between the East and the West, and much of the trade of these countries had to pass through it. The famous overland route—the Silken route—passed through Aryana, and thence proceeded to the Caspian Sea or Persia, either by the Oxus, which then flowed into the above sea, or entirely by land via Aeria (modern Herat). Similarly the intercourse between India and the countries of the West can be traced through this country from those remote ages. The people of India then carried a rich and lucrative trade with those countries, using mostly the highways of Aryana. Their chief articles of trade were: ivory, cotton goods, pearls and spices.

And finally in that hoary past a rudimentary form of democratic government existed in Aryana, where the chiefs and rulers were

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elected by the people in a tribal assembly, and where the common people had a say in the administration of their country. The kings and rulers of Aryana, though mostly very religious, were of broad outlook and believed in the freedom of religious opinions and modes of worship. They allowed their subjects of different creeds, not only free in the discharge of their religious duties, but honoured their religions as well. The medals of their coins, decorated with Bactrian, Greek, Buddhist, Persian and Hindu deities at one and the same time, bears testimony to the fact.

Lack of Chronology:—It is a pity that through the lack of reliable data we furnish a connected story of this early part of the Afghan history. Much has been done since the beginning of the nineteenth century in this connection, yet in spite of these efforts, most of its historical riddles are still largely unsolved and remain wrapped in darkness and oblivion, awaiting further research and excavations.

One of the most difficult problems that confronts us at the very start is the question of chronology, which is, indeed, shrouded in deepest darkness. Even to this day the important investigators and specialists differ with one another, with regard to the age of some important events, not by years or decades, but by centuries and even by thousands of years. For example let us take the case of the Rigveda, which stands at the beginning of the Aryan literature and is the fountain-head of the intellectual and spiritual life of that noble race. Unfortunately, as regards the age of this literary monument, even the most prominent scholars, Sanskrits and Vedic-specialists, differ by millenniums.

The first scholarly attempt to solve this tangled problem was, probably, made by Max Muller. But after a good deal of research and investigation, he too, is disappointed with his success, and gives his verdict on the subject in these few words: "Whether the Vedic hymns were composed 100 or 1000 or 3000 years before Christ, no power on earth will ever determine." Two other Sanskrit scholars, Jacobi and Tilak, working independently on the astronomical references in the Vedas, came to the conclusion that in the Vedic Text there are traces of an old calendar, which help one in fixing

6,000 B. C. (according to Tilak), and 4,000 B. C. (according to Jacobi) as the date of some early Vedic hymns. Professor Winternitz thinks that on historical grounds the age of the Veda must be placed nearer the date assumed by Jacobi and Tilak than that suggested by Max Muller.

Recently some documents were discovered from Mitani (or Mitannu) in north-eastern Asia Minor, containing contracts between two kings (of Mitani and of Hittites) in which some Vedic gods, such as Mi-itra (Mitra), Uruwana (Varuna), Indara (Indra), and Nasaatiia (Nasatya) were invoked and called to witness. As these documents can be traced back to about 1450 B. C., this discovery proves that the Vedic culture is at least older than fifteenth century B. C. Again some put forward the evidence of language and are of opinion that the language of the Old Persian inscriptions and that of the Avesta is very closely related to the language of the early Vedic hymns. The age of Avesta is not certain, but the old Persian inscriptions are not older than sixth century B. C., and it is, therefore, argued that the Vedic hymns can not be very much older.

Similar is the case of Avesta. Modern archaeologists and antiquarians differ widely as to the age of this religious book, and even as to the period in which Zoroaster lived. Some think that the Zend-Avesta originated at Bactria at least no later than the sixth and seventh century² before Christ. On the other hand, Bunsen and Eudoxus place him five thousand years before the death of Plato; while Hermippus puts him five thousand years before the Trojan War, which would be about 6,300 B. C. Bunsen, however, further remarks: At the present stage of the inquiry the question whether the date is set too high or too low cannot be answered either in the negative or affirmative." Spiegel, on the other hand, regards Zoroaster as contemporary to Abraham, and thus living about 5,000 B. C. Dollinger believes that he may have flourished somewhat later than Moses, perhaps about 1300 B. C. He further says, "It is impossible to fix precisely when he did live." Haug believes the Gaethas, the oldest songs of the Zend-Avesta, to have been composed as early as the time of Moses. Duncher and Rapp

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think Zoroaster lived about 1200 or 3000 B. C., and their view agrees with the period assigned to him by Xanthus of Sardis, a Greek writer of the sixth century before Christ, and by Cephallion in the Second century after Christ. Aristotle and Pliny also were familiar with the name of Zoroaster as a hoary figure that lived some five millenia before their time. Some modern Western scholars put down his era as late as the sixth century before Christ, making him practically a contemporary of Buddha. But there are reasons to believe that he could not have lived so late as that, and it would be safe to say that he must have lived 1000-1500 B. C. The only work that can be definitely ascribed to him is the Gathas, which are the oldest documents in Avesta, and bear a very strong resemblance to Rigveda and Pashto. It is also interesting to note in this respect that recently Mr. Jotindra Mohan Chatterjee of Bengal made a successful attempt to translate these Gathas into English by applying the rules of Panini's Sanskrit Grammar.

Into such an ocean of doubt and uncertainty we have to plunge to gather facts and figures, and therefore have to admit that much that can be said in this respect will be purely conjectural-dark, hazy, faint and indistinct. Chronological puzzles and controversial matter, have, as far as possible, been scrupulously avoided and differences of opinion have been briefly alluded to.

Sources of Information:-The sources of early Afghan history can briefly be classified under the following heads:

(1) Indigeonus literature useful for the study of this early period

are: (a) The Vedic Literature.-A critical study of the Rigveda may enable us to construct an interesting picture of the social and cultural life of the early inhabitants of this country

(b) The Avesta, too, throws a flood of light on this early period

(2) Archaeological Evidence:-This may be further divided into

(a) Pre-historic finds and excavations,

(b) Inscriptions. It is the inscriptions to which we are not only indebted for the surest data of our early history, but from which we hope to get the great number of solutions of problems still unsolved.

(c) Coins. Coins are also one of our most important knowledge about this early period, especially for our information about the Graeco-Bactrian kingdoms we are chiefly indebted to the coins struck by these kings. Numismatic and epigraphic evidence is very important in Afghanistan. Ancient coins are so numerous as to give the impression that there is no country in the world having such rich numismatic treasures. The coins one comes across there are of unusual varieties Greek, Bactrian, Thracian, Sassanian, Kushan, sakas, parthians, Hindu, ancient Afghan, Mughal and modern Afghan etc.

(b) Art and Architecture. Similary stupas, temples, caves, pillars with edicts, and other religious monuments of these early settlers help us to trace the development of religious thought and cultural uplift of the country at the dawn of history. They are a living testimony of the artistic achievements of our ancestors. Afghanistan is one of the most remarkable storehouses of antiquities, only touched by the hand of modern science. Not onnly are the relics of Graeco-Bactrian rule and Buddhist settlements numerous, there are innumerable pre-Buddhist remains scattered all over the country, which still await unearthing and unveiling.

The many Buddhist monasteries carved out of rocks are still the wonder of the scholars. Bamian was a great centre of culture, similar to those which are weknown to the Indologists in Nalanda, Ajanta, Odanapura, etc. The remains of Balkh, the Mother of Cities "when properly unearthed, might reveal the treasures of Greek culture, that are still hidden in the soil of Bactria. The same may be said of the valley of Bagram in Koliistan, which has now been finally identified with the spot occupied by

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the city of Capisi, made famous by Ptolomey and the Chinese pilgrim, Huiyen Tsang, in the 7th century A. D.

Recent excavations at Capisa, Hadda, Kakrak, Khairkhana Pass (in the vicinity of Kabul) Kunduz, Fundiqistan and Seistan, carried out by the French Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan since 1922, opened a new vista of the ancient civilizations of this country. The most recent excavations at Surhh-Kotal, about 10 miles northwest of the textile town of Pul-i-Khumri under the supervision of M. Daniel Schlumberger, Director of the French Archaeological Mission to Afghanistan, revealed more about the existence of Greeco-Kauchan culture than has ever been known before. Two temples unearthed there have supplied the Mission with what it believes is the long-sought "missing-link" between Hellenistic culture and Greek-Buddhism. This discovery has now made it possible to learn much about Hellenism in these remote areas before it merged with Buddhism.

Alexander the Great's military conquest (334-323 B. C.) extended Greek culture beyond present-day Persia far into the lowlands of the Oxus and Jaxartes (now Northern Afghanistan and Russian Turkestan) into the lowlands of the Indus.

After the Conqueror's sudden death (in 323 B. C.) a part at least of these areas remained Greek, with its capital at Bactria. However, very little is known about the Greek kingdom called "Bactria"; its conquests of Northern India at the beginning of the second century B. C., its struggle against central Asian nomads and its final collapse (toward 135 B. C.) In fact, only for a decidedly later period, have abundant traces of Hellenism been found, and of a very different kind--Hellenism in the service of Buddhism.

When more than a hundred years ago, remains of the so-called Greco-Buddhist art became known for the first time, they were recognized at once to be an offshoot of classical art. In that vast group of monuments the architectural forms are mainly Greek. Nevertheless the ruins are those of stupas and monasteries, not of temples; the bas-reliefs picture scenes of the Buddhist legends,

not of Greek mythology. For years the actual origins of Greco-Buddhist art have remained shrouded in deep obscurity.

What made them so difficult to discover was the total lack of evidence in Bactria itself, Monsieur Schlumberger says: Not only were the monuments of the Greek kings entirely lost (except for the coins) but also the monuments of their successors, the rulers during the transitional age between the collapse of Greek power and the expansion of Buddhism across the Hindu Kush into the plains of the Oxus, some three or four centuries later.

In 1922 the French Delegation was founded with headquarters in Kabul, with the express purpose of investigating the problem of the transmutation of Hellenism into Greco-Buddhism on the soil of Afghanistan. Since then many Buddhist remains have been brought to light by French excavators, but neither on the site of Bactria itself nor elsewhere, until two years ago, had they ever succeeded in finding Greek monuments of non-Buddhist character.

During the autumn of 1951, M. Schlumberger was informed by men north of the Hindu Kush that several stones bearing Greek letters had just been unearthed in the north of Afghanistan. The inscribed blocks had appeared on the main road from Kabul to Mazar-i-Sharif during construction of a road. Monsieur Schlumberger immediately decided that the place should be excavated.

Work started at the beginning of April, 1958. Weeks of digging revealed big sanctuary consisting of a fire temple in the centre of a courtyard, surrounded by an enclosure built of mud bricks, reinforced with timber on a massive basement with a stone facing adorned with pilasters. The temple consisted of a square room or "cella" in the centre of which was a large platform.

How was the temple to be dated? Parallels between the letters on the initially discovered blocks and on the coins or seals led the French excavators to ascribe the temple to the period of the Great Kushans. Also the excavation unexpectedly yielded the statue of a man wearing the very costume known to have been worn by the Kushan princes. This period is about three centuries later than the

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end of Greek rule in Baeria but the Hellenistic tradition had continued.

It was conjectured that the center platform of the temple had been used for fire rites, since it appeared to look like the pedestal for some important object. In the autumn of 1953 the second temple was discovered, with the fire altar still in place, definitely proving the first year's conjecture.

Since the French Archaeological Mission began work in Afghanistan excavations have been conducted at the monasteries of Hadda at Bamian and, with very notable results, at Bagram. But even now much remains to be done in this connection for many an important site are still unexplored.

(3) Writing of Foreigners. Classical writers and Chinese pilgrims are a most welcome source of our knowledge in this respect. Detailed authentic record of political conditions are not available before the Achaemenian Empire in the 6th century B. C., when the Greek writers and the cuneiform inscriptions enable us to trace some of the important events of the time regarding this country. Then came the Greek and Roman historians of Alexander the Great whose detailed accounts throw a flood of light on this part of history.

Next it is to the Chinese authorities that we must turn for the most trustworthy information. From about 400 AD. onwards there was a regular stream of Chinese pilgrims going to India through Aryan in order to visit the holy places of Buddhism and to collect Buddhist literature. Some of these were great scholars, who have left valuable records of their travels, and have given us a vivid picture of the country at this early stage, and their memoirs are indeed a mine of information to the student of ancient Afghan history. Fortunately, some of these writers have given us valuable information regarding the chronological data, which is wonderfully exact and correct.

And finally the Arab and early Muslim writers, such as Al-Buhārī, Tabarī, Balāzari, Awfi, Attabī and Fīrīshtā, also help us a good deal in elucidating the later part of this period.

CHAPTER 2

Pre-Aryan Afghanistan

We have no literary history of Afghanistan before the advent of the Aryans into that country. Research so far has thrown little light on this subject and therefore no connected story can be told of this early period. Some interesting information however, may be gleaned from prehistoric finds, and from a study of the languages and sociology of some of the hill tribes inhabiting certain inaccessible parts of this country even to day. Afghanistan, like most countries of the world, was occupied at long intervals by numerous groups of people differing widely in languages, customs and levels of culture. The earliest of these were savages known as the Palaeolithic men; a name derived from a Greek word meaning "Old Stone", and are so called because they used rude tools of chipped stone. This class of men existed then not only in Afghanistan, but in Europe and other regions of the world as well. They lived in natural caves or under the shelter of rocks, and sustained themselves on natural products of the forests or lived by the chase with the help of their rough stone implements. Probably they did not know how to make fire, and they were certainly ignorant of the use of metals. The only remnants of these people preserved for us are stone-tools formed by chipping.

The next stage of human culture is represented in Afghanistan by the Neolithic (New Stone) men. They continued to use stone tools, but these were of a more refined character, because after the chipping was complete, they were ground, grooved, and polished, and thus converted into highly finished objects of various forms adapted to diverse purposes. This Neolithic man was far advanced in civilization than his predecessor. He domesticated animals, cultivated land, used pottery, buried the dead, and constructed tombs.

The Neolithic man seems to have acquired, in course of time, the use of metal. The process must have been slow and gradual. It is noteworthy that early metal forms are close copies of the stone forms. Numerous settlements of Neolithic man are found near places where facilities for mining existed.

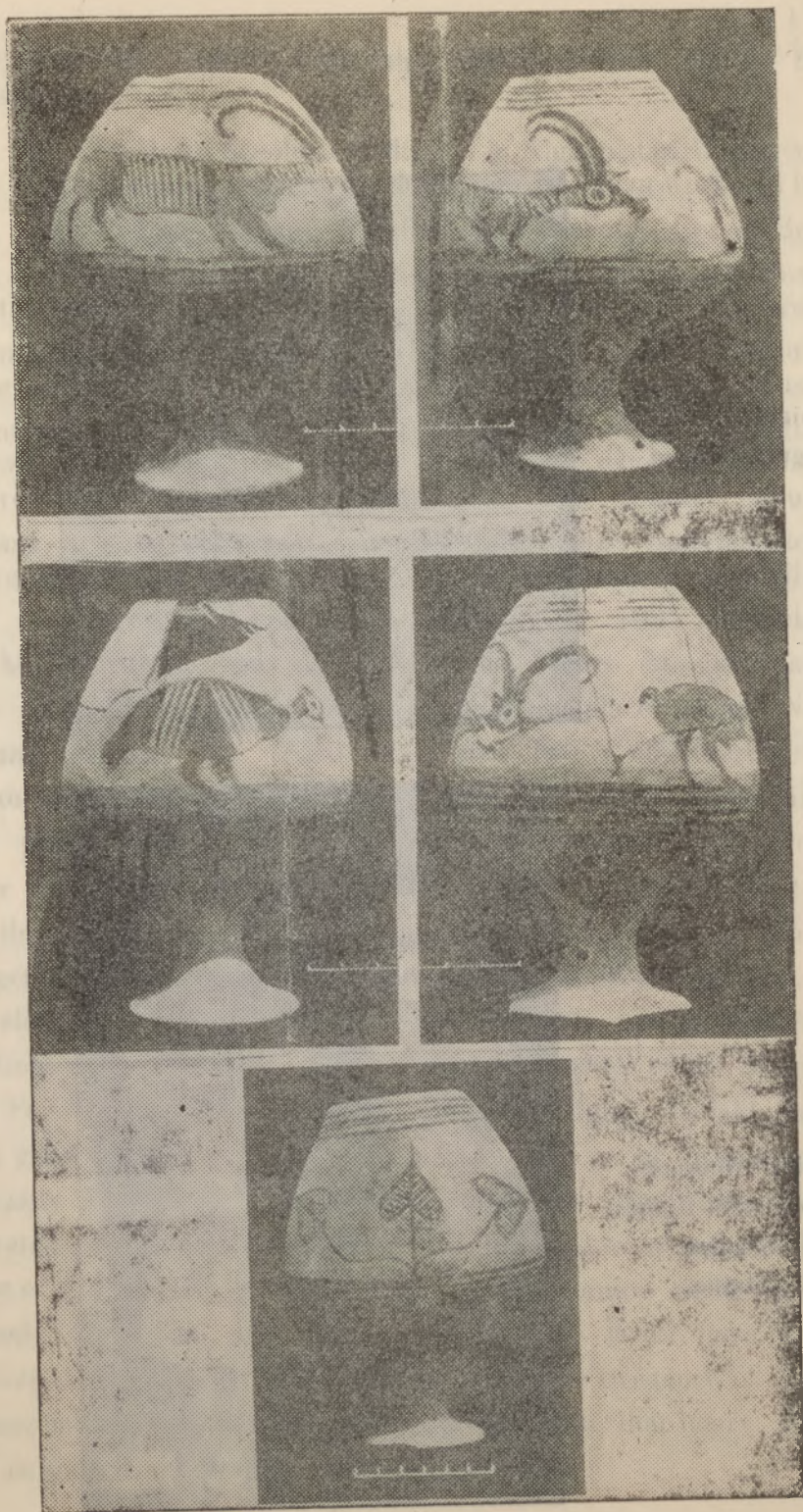
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The recent excavations of the city sites of Harappa and Mohenjodaro, on the banks of the Indus, have brought to light the existence of a highly developed civilization in the third millennium B.C., which is particularly interesting because of its close resemblance and similarity to the contemporaneous civilizations of Sumer and Elam.

Of the two cities, Mohenjodaro seems to have been the smaller one, occupying about a square mile of ground on the Indus bank. It is by far the better preserved of the two. It is possible that Harappa may be slightly older. It appears that it suffered frequently from floods, and was therefore rebuilt several times. That it was a flourishing commercial centre in those pre-historic times, is proved beyond dispute.

The age of civilization revealed by these excavations cannot be fixed with certainty. Certain objects discovered from excavations now proceeding in Mesopotamia have close resemblance to things found here. The Archaeologists believe that the upper levels of Mohenjodaro are contemporary with the later part of the early dynastic period of Babylon (about 2550 B. C.). The lower levels are certainly earlier, but it has not yet been possible to explore these lowest levels.

Nothing definite is known about the people who laid the foundation of these two cities. It is believed that they belonged to a pre-Aryan race. It is not possible to tell whether they were the original inhabitants of the soil or they too came from abroad. Their pictographic script bears a close resemblance to the script of the Sumerians as inhabitants of Babylon. It may therefore be assumed provisionally that the builders of these cities and the Proto-Elamites and the Sumerians had a common ancestry. It has also been suggested that they may be identical with a people mentioned as Panis in the Rigveda, as the representatives of an earlier commercial civilization. Some scholars believe that this



Mundigak: Bronze Age of Five Thousand Years Ago.
Painted Pottery

Bamian A Female
Figure Painted



Kabul Moseum :
Nouristan Room
Wooden
Statue



Handmade, Brown Age of Five Thousand Years Ago
Painted Pottery

civilization then extend from the valley of the Nile to the Indus basin.

The French Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan, during the space of the last three decades has done some excellent work, and has been able to discover some Buddhist, Indo-Hellenic, Graeco-Buddhist and Brahmanic temples, coins, idols, and paintings, which vie with the remarkable discoveries of the same kind in India. Numerous specimens of this fine arts now decorate the Kabul Museum. These discoveries are of the first order and have aroused the interest and pride of the Afghanistan in their forgotten past, and a desire to join forces with these scholars in their research into the hidden treasures of the country. Young Afghans in ever increasing numbers are now studying these new problems, and have already made some valuable contributions to the history of their glorious past. In 1935 M. Hackin and M. Griechman, two members of the French Mission, made some valuable excavation in Seistan at a place called Nad Ali and Tarosar. The finds discovered had a close resemblance to those found in the Indus Valley, Sumer and Elam, and it is presumed that the lower depths, if unearthed, will throw better light on the common civilization of these countries. Seistan was then a flourishing province and lay on the highway which connected the Indus basin with the countries of Western Asia. It has also been proved that even at this early age commercial relations existed between Afghanistan and countries of the Middle East. For example, lapis lazuli, a produce of Afghan Badakhshan, had a good market in these countries. Specimens of ornaments, especially rings and seals, studded with this stone, have been excavated in different parts of Sumer, Elam, and even as far as the valley of the Nile. From the tomb of Toutankhammon an Egyptian Pharaoh, some fine articles of Afghan lapis lazuli have been discovered, which go a long way to prove the existence of close commercial relations between these countries in that hoary past (that is second millennium B. C.).

CHAPTER 3

The Coming of the Aryans.

Original Home of the Aryans. The history of Aryana divides itself into several distinct and well-defined periods or eras, marked by great historical events, most among these is the coming of the Aryans. We shall, therefore, begin our history with the settlements of the Aryans in Bactria (Northern Afghanistan). The hymns of the Rigveda, which date probably from 2000 to 1400 B.C., and the songs of the Avesta, perhaps a little later, furnish us with some valuable materials for a history of this period. As we have already pointed out we know but little about the early history of this country before the advent of the Aryans. These Aryans, who originally belonged to a great family of races, are generally known to the scholars under the name of Indo-German or Indo-Europeans. The ties of common blood of these early races which are now spread over the surface of the earth are proved by the close kinship of their language, beliefs, rituals, manners and customs. If we compare English, German, French, Latin, Greek, Russian, Pashto, Persian, and Sanskrit words of daily use in family life, we shall find in them remarkable similarities.

The resemblance in the grammatical structure of these languages, though less obvious, is no less real. All this can be explained by the supposition that the ancestors of the speakers of these languages must have lived together at some remote past. When and where they lived together, no one can say definitely. To frame our reply to these questions, let us first refer to tradition. The Greeks looked towards the east for the abode of their gods, and so did the Romans. This would suggest the idea that they came to Europe from the east, for the nations of antiquity believed themselves to be the descendants of their gods, and consequently it may be fairly taken for granted that the country of their gods was likewise the country of their original ancestors. The Parsis (Zoroasterians) who are descendants of the same race, also point to the east as their original home.

To the east of Persia we have Central Asia and Afghanistan. Similarly the Indo - Aryans, when dwelling in the valleys of the Five Rivers, pointed to the north, that is Afghanistan, as their heaven. According to these traditions the original home of the Aryans was Arya - Vesta (Arya-Vartha or Arya-Versha), that is the Abode of the Honourable Men. This seems to be the country watered by the Oxus and the Murghab, and bounded by the Caspian Sea on the west, the Hindukush on the south, the Kailas Range on the east, and the Kizilkum and other sandy deserts on the north.

And according to the Avesta, the original home of the Aryans was Aryana-Vaejo (Eriene-Veejo or Airyanem-Vego) , which Ahura Mazda had created and was a region of delight and a kind of earthly paradise. Some geological convulsions changed the climate of the country, by which this primeval happy home of the Aryans became suddenly very cold, which induced the migration of the Aryans to other countries.

The fact that they lived in a country lying in the temperate zone can be proved by the flora and fauna with which they were familiar. It is admitted that they were familiar with the oak, beech, willow, birch, lime, elm, and some coniferous trees. They lived in a country where barley was grown and horses were reared. The usual animals best known to them, besides the horse, were the ox and cow, the sheep, the dog, the pig, and probably some species of deer. The ass, the camel, and the elephant were apparently unknown to them at this early stage. Of birds they knew the goose, the duck, and the eagle. The beasts of prey known to them were the wolf and the bear, but they were not as yet familiar with the lion or the tiger.

From these the scholars have tried to locate the primitive home of the Aryans. Bactria, Chinese Turkestan, the Pamirs, Ger-

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many, plains of the Middle Danube, the Steppes of southern Russia, and Western Siberia have all been suggested as the original habitat of these Indo-European races. Some even think that they came from the land which the ancients knew under the name of Scythia, or from that vast country which corresponds to the present Southern Russia. It could not have been the Pamirs, one of the most cheerless and inhospitable regions of the world, which cannot afford a large population. Others think that they must have come from the countries between Prussia and Crimea, especially those bordering the Danube, such as Austria, Hungary, and the other Balkan States, which fulfil some of the above conditions. This part of Europe, they argue, combines pastrol and agricultural lands in close connection, and is suitable for the growth of grain, and favourable for the rearing of flocks and herds, and at the same time has trees and birds with which these primitive Aryans were familiar.

Another theory is that these Aryans came from the steppes of southern Russia. But others argue that this could not have been the original home of these people, as the way of Turkestan, that is the land between the Caspian and Aral the Seas, which leads through arid and gloomy plains and sandy deserts, must have been impassable to primitive men moving with their families and their flocks and herds.

GENERAL MIGRATION.

To enter into the details of this vexed question is beyond the scope of this book. The general opinion is that their original home, that is Aryana-Vaejo, was somewhere in Central Asia, probably between the two mighty rivers, Vahri-datya and Arang (present Oxus and Jaxartes), and that it was from the plains of Bactria (Northern Afghanistan) that their general migration took place. Bactria enjoys the reputation of having been a great and glorious country in primeval times, and it is considered by a large number of scholars, the pre-historic home of the Aryans, and the cradle of the Indo-European races. In the oldest-portion of the Zend-Avesta it is celebrated as "Bakhdi iredhwo-drafsha," that is Bactria with lofty banners.

Again according to F. et al. the pre-historic Aryans, the ancestors of the Indian Persians, Medes, Greeks, Latins, Celtic, Teutons, and Slavs, were dwe-

ling in Central Asia, in the region of Bactria, some 3000 years before Christ. They must have lived there for a considerable time so as to develop a language which became later on the mother-tongue of all the Indo-European languages. They were mostly a pastoral people, but not nomads, as they had fixed habitations. They had oxen, horses, goats, and domestic fowls. Herds of cows fed in pastures, each owned by a community, and each having a cluster of stables in the centre of the village. They were likewise an agricultural people, as they certainly had barley, and perhaps some other cereals before their separation into the three branches, which, ultimately spread over India, Media, Fars (old name of Persia) and Europe.

Another important question that confronts us now is: When did this general migration take place? No one can say with certainty, but it could not have been before 2500 B. C. Some suggest that at the beginning of the sixteenth century B. C., the first great migration of the Aryans took place. This date is supported by the establishment of the Aryan dynasties in Mitani between 1500 and 1450 B. C. It has been proved beyond all doubts that by the fifteenth century B. C. tribes of Aryan stock held or exercised influence over a wide area extending from northern Asia Minor to the Indus Basin.

These migrations were not into unpeopled territories, but before the Aryans reached the frontiers of India or Asia Minor, they had many hard struggles with the aborigines, who looked upon them as "some great cloud of destroying locusts" which devoured everything that came across their way and left them to perish by starvation or to survive as miserable captives under cruel conquerors. Success was achieved only by hard struggle and by successive waves of the invaders, who knew that if their successors delayed too long, the migrants of the first advancing columns were likely to be cut to pieces or subdued.

The real cause which led to this general migration is also not very clear to us. According to the Avesta, which we have already quoted, it was due to a sudden change of climate, while others contend that as time passed the Indo-European increased in numbers, and their original home became too congested to provide them

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with necessities of life. They were, therefore, obliged to find new homes for themselves. Many of their branches migrated in various directions and gradually settled in the fertile plains of Asia and Europe.

One branch, Indo-Aryans as it is called, crossed the lofty Hindukush into Eastern Afghanistan, and from there by the valleys of the Kabul, Kurram and Gomul, they gradually entered the Indus basin and Sapta Sindhu (Northern India). Here after many a bloody contest, they overpowered the aborigines, probably the Dravidians. Fresh hordes of their race were following in their wake, and so to make room for them, the first comers were constantly compelled to move further east towards the valleys of the Jumna and- the Ganges.

The other branch advancing into Persia first settled in the provinces of Media and Fars. From them the Kassites learned of the sun-god (Surya), the pest-god (Marut), and the storm-god (Burya), and discovered that the horse, the warrior's animal, far excelled the slow ox and ass as a draft animal.

The western wing of the Aryans, however, did not pause at the Zagros Ranges. Its leaders drove on westward to the great land of the Tigris and Euphrates, where in Mitani they settled down and established powerful kingdoms. Their names are basically Indo-European; even their gods bore Indo-Aryan names, such as : Indra, Varuna, Mitra etc. Their warriors, too, were known by a familiar word in Sanskrit, Marya, which means heroes.

THE RIGVEDA.

It has been suggested by some writers that when the Aryans entered the Panjab, they were no better than a group of semi-civilized tribes, and that they borrowed the main essentials of their culture from the aborigines. It is difficult to find support for such a hypothesis. The Rigveda, the oldest Indo-European literary monument, is certainly not borrowed from the aborigines, and it is not the literature of semi-civilized people. Similarly the Avesta, another legacy

of the Aryans, has nothing to do with the Dravidian culture. It is now admitted that before this general migration took place and before they entered the country of Five Rivers (the Panjab), the Aryans were fairly advanced in civilization. In the course of that long period known as the Age of Rigveda, they had developed a peculiar culture, had succeeded in laying the foundation of prosperous cities and powerful kingdoms, and had framed some primitive rules of social life.

This ancient poetry, Rigveda, has come down to us in the form of a collection of hymns. From century to century these hymns were handed down without break or intermission from father to son. The youths of the priestly houses spent the prime of their life in learning them by rote from the lips of their gray-headed sires. It was thus that this inestimable treasure, the Rigveda, preserved intact for hundreds of years.

The number of hymns contained in the Rigveda is 1028, which are grouped in ten books, mandalas or "cycles". Tradition has it that various parts were written by various priestly families, and that it was not all written at one time. Some hundreds of years must have been needed for all the hymns found in the Rigveda to come into being. The poets of Rigveda themselves mention predecessors in whose wise they sing, whose songs they desire to renew, and speak of ancestral hymns produced in the days of yore. The Rigveda deals in particular with the elaborate ceremonies and sacrifices performed by the kings and nobles on various occasions. By far the greater part of the poetry of the Rigveda consists of religious lyrics, only the tenth book containing some secular poems. Its hymns are mainly addressed to the various gods of the Vedic pantheon, praising their mighty deeds, their greatness, and their beneficence, or beseeching them for wealth in cattle, numerous offspring, prosperity, long life, and victory. The Rigveda is not a collection of primitive popular poetry; it is rather a body of skilfully composed hymns. Its language is, generally speaking, simple and unaffected. The hymns of the Rigveda vary much in literary merit, as is naturally to be expected in the production of many poets extending over some centuries. Many display a high order of poetical excellence, while others

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consist of commonplace and mechanical verse. The degree of skill in composition is remarkably high, especially when we take into consideration the time when these hymns were written.

The language as well as the mythology of the Rigveda has a close resemblance with that of the Avesta. The Vedic deities go back to the time when the ancestors of Persians and Indians were still one people. Among these may be mentioned Yama, god of the dead, identical with Yima, ruler of paradise, and Mitra, the Persian counterpart of Mithra. Various religious practices can also be traced back to this early age, such as the worship of fire and the cult of the plant Soma (the Avestan Haoma).

Home of the Rigvedic Aryans. The historians differ as to the home of the Rigvedics, Aryans, but a study of the geographical conditions of the country which they tell us will solve this problem. That the Indo-Aryans at the time when the hymns of the Rigveda arose, had not yet spread over the plains of Northern India, and were still domiciled in the valleys of the Indus and its western tributaries—that is Eastern Afghanistan—is borne out by two facts. First, by topographical considerations, foremost among these being the names of rivers mentioned in the Rigveda, such as the Kubha (the Kabul), the Suvasti (Swat), the Krumu (Kurram), the Gomati (Gomal), and the Sindhu (Indus); and second, by climatic considerations and the flora and fauna of the country mentioned in these poems. The animal and the plant worlds in the Rigveda are essentially different from those of the later years. For example the Soma, the most important plant of the Rigveda, is a product of a hilly country, and is grown mainly on the mountains, and must have been easily obtainable, as its juice was used in large quantities for the daily rituals. In the later period, when the Aryans settled in the plains of the Five Rivers, it was brought from long distances, or substitutes had to be used on account of its rarity. The elephant, an animal which is found in nearly every part of India, was not known to these composers of early Vedic hymns. The Rigveda does not mention at all the tree which is most characteristic of India, and shades with its wide-spread foliage a larger area, than

any other tree on the face of the earth, that is the banyan (*Ficus-indica*). This tree is still considered sacred by the Hindus. Similarly rice, the chief produce of Indian agriculture and the staple food of the Indians, is quite unknown to the writers of the Rigveda. The most dreaded beast of prey in India, the tiger, is also not mentioned in these hymns.

The Rigveda mentions many tribes among the Aryans, one of them being the Gandharis, who are referred to as breeders of sheep. They were later well known as Gandharas - inhabitants of the Kabul valley. The Rigveda Aryans styled themselves Aryas or "kinsmen" as opposed to the aborigines, to whom they gave the name of Dasyu or Dasa, "fiends." The chief physical difference between the two races was that of colour. The aborigines were described as "black", in contrast with "Aryan colour" or "our colour".

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ORGANISATIONS OF THE EARLY ARYANS.

The Aryans were a martial and energetic race full of self-assertion and vigour of a young national life, with a strong love for action and a capacity for active enjoyment. With their strong arms they were trying to win by force new possessions and realms from the aborigines, who vainly struggled to hold their own against the successive waves of these invincible conquerors. Thus their early period was one of wars and conflicts on various fronts. These Aryans proudly boast of their victories in their hymns, and implore their gods to bestow on them new possessions, numerous offsprings, and destroy their enemies, whom they call barbarians.

The Aryans, at this early age, were divided into tribes; each tribe being a political unit. The tribe was further divided

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into families. The social system of the Aryans centred round the family, the father (grahpati) being the head, the mother (grihapatni) being the mistress of the house. The family life was healthy and cheerful, resting upon the sacred tie of marriage, which was considered indissoluble. The father was the protector as well as the nourisher of all the members of the family, while the mother (the mistress of the house) looked after and fed the children. The young daughters milked the cows and helped their mother in her household duties.

Girls had a say in the choice of their husbands. Permission to marry a girl was asked from her father through the mediation of an intimate friend. The wedding was celebrated in the house of the bride's parents, whither the bridegroom repaired in procession with his relatives and friends. Here they were sumptuously entertained. At the marriage ceremony held openly, the bridegroom taking the bride's hand led her round the nuptial fire. At the conclusion of the wedding festival, the bride, anointed and in festal array, mounted with her husband a cart adorned with red flowers and drawn by a team of white bulls. She was thus conducted in procession to her new house. In the hymns we hear of married couples who, with minds in harmony, press the Soma and mix its juice with milk and offer adoration to the gods.

Though the wife was looked upon as inferior to her husband and subject to his will, yet she enjoyed great liberty, and occupied a position of greater honour in the age of the Rigveda than she was allotted in the later periods. She participated with her husband in religious ceremonies, and was the mistress of the house, sharing the control, not only of the servants and slaves, but also of the unmarried brothers and sisters of her husband.

The Aryans of this early age were usually monogamic, though polygamy was not unknown, especially among the rich and princely classes. The standard of morality was fairly high. Adultery and rape were counted among the most serious offences, and illegitimate births were concealed.

As the family could only be continued in the male line, an abundance of sons was constantly prayed for, along with wealth in cattle and lands, and the newly-wedded husband hoped that his bride might become the mother of heroes. Lack of sons was placed on the same level as poverty, and adoption was regarded as a mere makeshift. No desire for the birth of daughters is ever expressed in the Rigveda. Even to have a daughter was regarded as misery.

The Aryans were a democratic people and used to elect their chief (Raja, Rajan or Visapati) in an elected council called Sabha. The Samiti was the tribal assembly composed of all people, while the Sabha was a Council of the Elders, the priests and the nobles. Even when a Raja enjoyed hereditary rights and was vested with the supreme power, he was never absolute, nor exceeded his authority, on the contrary he tried to abide by the will of his people expressed in the tribal assembly.

In times of national emergency, such as wars, the Raja had the chief command of all the forces. Besides, it was his duty to offer sacrifices on behalf of his people, either performing the rites himself or employing a priest for the purpose.

Dress, Ornaments. Food and Drinks.- A loam garment with a cloak was worn. Clothes were usually woven of sheep's wool, often variegated in colour and sometimes even adorned with gold. Necklets, bracelelets, anklets, and earrings are mentioned in the way of ornaments. The hair was usually oiled and combed. Women also plaited their hair.

On festive occasions wreaths of flowers were worn by men. Beards were usual, though shaving was occasionally practised.

The chief article of food was milk, which was either taken raw, or used in cooking grain, as well as mixing with Soma. Grain was eaten after being parched, or ground to flour between millstones, and was then made into cakes with milk or butter. Various kinds of fruits and vegetables were used. The Aryans, though vegetarians, usually took meat on ceremonial occasions when animals were sacrificed. Bulls were the chief offerings to the gods, and beef was probably the kind of meat most frequently eaten. Horse-flesh must have been less frequently used.

The Rigvedic Aryans were acquainted with at least two kinds of spiritous liquor. Soma was the principal one. It was usually restricted to occasions of religious character, such as sacrifices and festivals. The spirit in ordinary use was called Sura, which was a kind of beer.

Occupation and Trade.—The principal means of livelihood was cattle-breeding. But the Aryans were not only a pastoral people; they knew the art of agriculture as well, and took with them into India a rich variety of agricultural resources, such as millet, barley, wheat and oil-seeds. They also practised hunting of wild animals to a considerable extent. The hunter pursued his game usually with bow, or used traps or snares. Birds were generally caught with nets spread on ground. Some animals were even taken with the help of trained dogs.

There are many passages in the Rigveda which show that many arts and crafts were carried to a high stage of excellence. These Aryans seem to have been well-versed in the art of Spinning and weaving, both in wool and silk. They were acquainted with pottery and had an adequate knowledge of working metals,

such as gold, silver, copper and tin. Carpenters and smiths were held in great esteem. References are particularly frequent to carpenters and joiners who made chariots, boats and carts. The smith knew the smelting of ores in a furnace, using the wings of birds instead of bellows to produce a draught. He made kettles as well as other domestic utensils of metal. The Rigveda also refers to tanners and to women who were acquainted with sewing, with plaiting mats from grass or reeds.

A considerable advance was made with the manufacture of arms, weapons, and various kinds of ornaments. The steed of war had golden caparisons, and the warriors had usually golden ornaments round their necks.

One of the chief occupations of the Rigvedic Aryans was, of course, warfare. They fought on foot, and those who could afford them had chariots. Cavalry is not mentioned, and probably came into use at a considerably later period. The warriors were protected by coats of mail and helmets of metal. The principal weapons were bows and arrows with poisonous tips. Lances, swords, shields, spears and axes are also frequently mentioned. The horse was greatly valued, and harnessed to the chariot, bore the warrior to the field of battle, and also at the popular chariot races gained praises and glory for the victor.

Trade and transactions were carried on by the barter system, and the chief articles of exchange were domestic animals.

Amusements. The chariot race was a favourable amusement. Among other chief social recreation of men one was gambling with dice. No certain information can be gathered from the Rigveda as to how the game was played. Another amusement was dancing, which seems to have been indulged in by men as well as woman. Dancing generally took place in the open air.

Various references in the Rigveda further show that even in that early age the Aryans were acquainted with different kinds of music. Stringed instruments, the drum, flute, and lute were commonly used. That they were fond of music may be inferred from the statement of a Rishi (learned) "that the sound of the flute is heard in the abode of Yama, where the blessed dwell."

The religion of the Rigvedic Aryans was simple and poetic. They were attracted by the powers of Nature, which made a great impression on their simple minds and imagination. The higher gods of the Rigveda are almost entirely personifications of natural phenomena, as Sun, Dawn, Fire and Wind. Their religion was pre-eminently the worship of these natural objects in their most imposing and sublime aspects. The sky which bends over all, the beautiful and blushing dawn, which like a busy housewife wakes men from sleep and sends them to their work, the gorgeous sun, which vivifies the earth, the life-giving air which pervades the world, the fire which cheers and enlightens men and the violent storms which fill the land with plenty--these were the gods whom the early Aryans loved to extoll and worship.

The most important of their gods was Indra, primarily a thunder god, who represented the warrior-chief leading men to victory against the non-Aryan races.

Next to Indra, Agni was an important deity, being the messenger between the gods and their followers. He is not only the terrestrial fire, he is also the fire of lightning and the sun, and his abode is the invisible heaven.

Varuna, god of light, heaven and sky, was also the deity of righteousness. His omniscience is often dwelt on. He knows the flight of the birds in the sky, the path of the ships in the ocean and the course of far-travelling wind. He beholds all the secret things that have been or shall be done. He witnesses men's truth and falsehood. No creature can even wink without his consent. The following stanzas from a hymn to Varuna will illustrate the above belief in him:

Whoever stands, whoever moves,

Or steals from place to place,

Or hides him in secret cell,

The gods his movement trace.

Wherever two together plot,

And deem they are alone,

King Varuna is there a third,

And all their schemes are known.

But the most beautiful creation of the Rigvedic hymns is the charming godaess of the Dawn, Ushas by name. Indeed there is no lovelier conception in the Rigveda than that of this goddess, and there are no hymns more truly poetical than those dedicated to her, and nothing more charming is to be found in the lyrical poetry of any ancient nation. The following stanzas from one of the fairest hymns addressed to Dawn furnish a vivid picture of this fairest creation of Vedic poetry :

Thou sweet smilest, goddess-fair,
 Disclosing all thy youthful grace,
 Thy bosom bright, thy radiant face,
 And lustre of thy golden hair.

So shines a fond and winning bride,
 Who robes her form in brilliant guise,
 And to her Lord's admiring eyes
 Displays her charms with conscious pride.

Or virgin by her mother decked,
 Who, glorying in her beauty, shews
 In every glance, her power she knows
 All eyes to fix, all hearts subject.

Or actress, who by skill in song
 And dance, and graceful gestures light;
 And many coloured vestures bright,
 Enchants the eager, gazing throng.

Or maid, who wont her limbs to lave
 In some cool stream among the woods,

Where never vulgar eye intrudes,
Emerges from the wave.

But closely by the amorous sun
Pursued, and vanquished in the race

Thou art locked in his embrace,
And with him blendest into one.

Fair Ushas ! though through years untold,

Thou hast lived on, thou art born

Anew on each succeeding morn,

And so thou art both young and old.

Behind the belief in many gods there was, however, a deeper belief in one single spiritual force behind the universe ; one Reality embracing all the gods. We get many hints of this deeper belief in the Rigvedic hymns. One of these explains in clear words that the different Rigvedic gods are but different names of the one incomprehensible Deity or as various manifestations of the One Supreme Power. It runs thus :

“He who has given us life, who is the Creator ; He, who knows all the places in the universe, He is one, although He bears the names of many gods.”

And again : “Truth is one ; the sages call it by many names.” Sacrifice was an essential part of the creed and was often occupied by devout prayers. But sacrifice was looked upon as a bargain between the gods and men, as a simple give and take business. Oblations were offered and hymns were addressed to a number of deities having their abodes in natural phenomena but endowed with human instincts.

It is noteworthy that at this time the Aryans had no temples, no idols and no priestly class ; each patriarch of the family himself

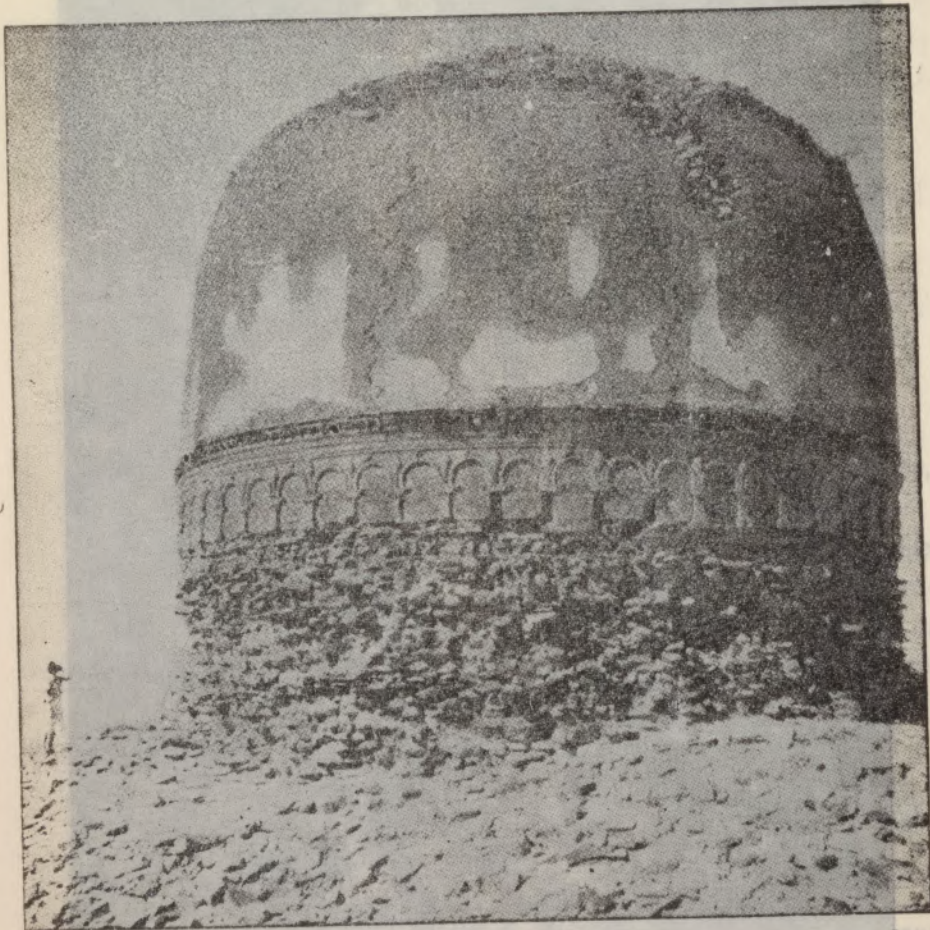
lighted the sacrificial fire on his own hearth, and offered milk and
 the animals or libations of Soma; as the fire and the gods' blessing
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Takemash, another king of this line; while a third group of writers
 attributes it to Lohrasp. Kabul Museum: Begram-Roc.n, Ivory Statue
 First city of the Aryans and the capital of Bactria continued to
 be the seat of the early kings of Aryan for several centuries,
 and it was here that the early writers laid the foundations of
 their glorious civilization.



Kabul: Buddhist Stupa of Tchakari 10 Miles to the South-East of the city. Third century.

lighted the sacrificial fire on his own hearth, and offered milk and rice, animals or libations of Soma to the fire, and invoked the gods' blessings, health and wealth for himself and the members of his family. The rajas often had priests (purohita) to perform sacrifices and utter hymns on their behalf, but there was no royal caste, and no separate priestly caste. Men did not retire into forests and subject themselves to penance. On the contrary, the old Rishis (wise men) were worldly people, who had considerable property in crops and cattle and were surrounded by large families. In the time of peace they took to agriculture or rearing of cattle, while in the time of war, they took up arms to fight their enemies.

CHAPTER 4 The Great Epic Age.

In addition to its real history, Afghanistan has a legendary history of its own, based on the Rigveda, the Avesta, the Shahnama, Nama-i-Khusrowan, Garshasapnama and several other epic poems. A careful study of this legendary history enables the reader to glean some important and interesting information about the cultural and religious development of the country in the pre-historic period.

The oldest legendary dynasties are three in number, viz: (1) Paradhatha (Pardadian or Peshdadian), (2) Kavi (Kavian, Kiyanian or Kayanians), (3) Aspaha.

(1) Peshdadian: According to some traditions the first king of this dynasty was Kaimurath, who laid the foundation of Bakhdi (modern Balkh). Others account the foundation of this city to Tahmurath, another king of this line; while a third group of writers attributes it to Lohrasp of the Kiyanian dynasty. Bakhdi, the first city of the Aryans and the capital of Bactria continued to be the seat of the early kings of Aryana for several centuries, and it was here that the early settlers laid the foundation of their glorious civilization.

According to another tradition the first king of Peshdadian was Hawshyanghan (or Hushang), who, it is said, had power over demons. He was followed by Takhmo-urupa (or Tahmurath), surnamed Deo-Band (Demon binder). According to Avesta he was able to force Ahriman (the Evil Spirit) to act as his steed, and to carry him all over the universe. In his reign civilization made rapid progress. He taught men the arts of weaving cloth and domesticating animals. He trained the snow-leopard and various kinds of falcons and used them for hunting wild animals and birds. He had an able and pious minister, Shedasp by name, who introduced the custom of morning and evening prayers.

Then came Jamshid of the Divine Lustre. He is the same as Yima of the Avesta, and Yama of the Rigveda. He is looked upon by some as the real founder of the Peshdadian dynasty, and the king who laid the foundation of "Bakhdi of Lofty Banners." He is supposed to be the son of Vivanghana, to whom the extraction of Haoma is attributed.

Jamshid was a happy and glorious king. In his long reign there was neither poverty nor hunger or scarcity, neither sickness nor death. He drove demons into Hell, where they were locked till the end of his reign. It is also said that he was offered the task of proclaiming the Sacred Law, but he refused the offer on the ground that the time was not opportune for such a move. This was therefore left to Zoroaster. It is also alleged that he was constantly in touch with Ahura Mazda, who gave him a golden rod and a golden plough. The first served him as an emblem of sovereignty, while the other helped him in teaching his people the art of agriculture. He also taught men the arts of planting trees, digging canals, irrigating lands and domesticating animals. The result was that men multiplied and increased to such an extent that the earth had to be expanded to three times its original size to accommodate the surplus population.

At the end of his long and glorious reign, Ahura Mazda announced to him the approach of a severe winter, heavy falls of snow, and terrible floods that would cover the face of the earth.

He was, therefore, advised to make a square enclosure (Vara--a citadel) for himself, and there to preserve the sacred fire, fine pairs of animals, seeds of fairest trees and plants, and a good number of tall and handsome men and women with sufficient quantities of food for them. He was to stay there till the storm was over.

Jamshid, following the advice, built a beautiful citadel for himself at Bakhdi, which came to be known as the "City of Lofty Banners." He then took shelter in the castle with all the living animals and seeds as he was advised to do, till the deluge subsided and land reappeared. He then came out of his stronghold and repopled the earth with his faithful folk.

It is said that ultimately Jamshid's good fortune and success made him proud and forgetful of Ahura Mazda. He thought that he himself was God, and demanded to be paid divine homage. The Divine Glory, which had accompanied him so far, left him. He was no longer worthy to rule over the people, and his kingdom fell into the hands of Dahak (Azhi-Dahaka that is the "Deadly-Snake.")

This Dahak, who had the surname of Boevara-aspa (lord of ten thousand horses) was a Semitic, who had come from Babylonia, and his mother was a descendant of Ahriman. He was a three-headed snake, with three mouths and six eyes. According to another legend two snakes had grown out of his shoulders, which had to be fed each day with human brains.

Poor Jamshid, leaving his motherland, took shelter with Kureng, king of Zabul (old name of the district of Ghazni), and married his daughter. From this marriage sprang the line of Rustam, the famous legendary hero of Seistan. It is said that one of the descendants of Jamshid from his new wife was Garshasp, the father of Neriman, whose son was Sam. This Sam had a son Zal by name, who during his long wanderings once came to Kabul. Mihrab the king of Kabul received him warmly. Zal, during his stay there, fell

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in love with Rudabeh, the king's daughter. Their son was Rustam, the hero of Herculean strength.

Jamshid could not stay long in Kabul as he was closely pursued by Dahak. He took once more to his adventurous wanderings, and at last made his way to China, where he was caught by Dahak's men and sawn into two.

Dahak was never popular with his people; he was rather looked upon as a usurper. Human brains were required daily to feed his snakes, and this made him all the more detestable. Thraetaona (popularly known as Feridun), son of Athwya and a descendant of Jamshid, who had been brought up in the hills by a herdsman, took up arms against him. Before starting on his expedition, Thraetaona sacrificed 100 horses, 1000 bullocks and 10,000 sheep to Ardivi Sura Anahita, goddess of water. He was fortunately helped in his expedition by a smith of great experience, Kava by name, who was given the command of his forces. Kava overthrew the tyrant. Dahak was captured and locked up at the foot of Mount Demavend. Two daughters of Jamshid, Arnawak (or Arnawaz) and Swanhawak (or Shahrnaz) were also rescued from the cruel clutches of the oppressor.

Then Garshasp or Garsaspa came to power. He was the son of Thritha, a descendant of Jamshid. Thritha was a botanist, and had extracted Haoma and some useful drugs from plants, which he used for the welfare of his people. Ahura Mazda, therefore, blessed him with two sons, Urvakshaya and Garsaspa. The first was a great law-giver, while the second rose to power and was able to extend the limits of his dominions to Arghandab and Seistan.

(2) The Kianids.-After the collapse of the Peshdadian, the Kianids came to power. They are so called because every king's name of this line is preceded by the word "Kai, Kavi or Kava". The first king of this line was Kava Kovata (or Kai Kubad), who, like his predecessor, made Balkh the seat of his government. He reigned gloriously and was able to vanquish the Turanian hordes with the help of Rustam. With the accession of his son Kava

U-sa (or Kai Kaus) war again broke out with the Turanians. Kava Usa, after punishing the Turanians, turned his attention towards the west, where the Mazana Devils had created trouble. After some severe battles Kava Usa was able to drive the enemy after great slaughter into the Mazindran forests.

The third king of this line was Kavi Syavarshana (Siyavush or Siyavash). He too, continued wars against the Turanians, who were again encroaching on Bactria's borders. He built a strong fortress on the right bank of the Oxus to stem the tide of these relentless raiders. Unfortunately he had to give up his life in the defence of his country.

Kai Khusro (or Kava Husrava), son of Kavi Syavarashana, is perhaps the last king of this line. He was a great king and an able administrator. He too, put up a strong resistance against the inroads of the Turanians, and ultimately with the help of Rustam, he was able to annihilate the invaders, whose king Afrasiab was taken prisoner and put to death. After this his reign was happy, for the hereditary enemy of Aryana was gone. He is said to have ultimately disappeared and no one ever found a trace of him. His followers, including many of the most distinguished nobles of his court, are also said to have perished in a dreadful storm.

(3) The Aspās.-The third legendary dynasty is known by the name of the Aspās, as the name of each of king of this family ends with the word ,aspa or asp'. Kai Khusro had no male issue, but daughters only, four in number. Towards the close of his life he announced to his people that he had chosen for his successors Lohrasp (Aurvāt-Aspa, Lord of Swift-footed horse), who is supposed to have been of collateral line. He, too, had his capital at Bahhdi, where he set up a new temple. Legend here comes close to history. Lohrasp had two sons--Vistaspa (or Gushtasp) and Zarir (Zarivar). In his life time Lohrasp handing over the reigns of his empire to his eldest son Gushtasp, retired to the fire-temple, which he had erected at Bakhdi.

It was in the reign of Gushtasp (about 1,000 B. C.) that the legend places the death of Spitama Zarathushtra, whom we speak of as Zardusht or Zoroaster, and whom classical and oriental writers concur in designating as a native of Bactria or Balkh. Gushtasp was one of Zoroaster's most zealous proselytes. He erected fire-temples in all parts of his dominions, and put to death so many of those who opposed the new doctrine that his subjects were intimidated into the universal adoption of worship of fire. His queen, Hutaosa, and his brother Zarir, together with a large number of the nobles and courtiers, embraced the new faith, and took a keen part in its propagation, not only in Aryana itself, but in foreign countries as well.

The religion which Zoroaster preached was an attempt to account for the co-existence of good and evil. Creation was thus divided between two spirits--Ahura Mazda, the Good, and Ahirman the Evil Spirit. The former represented the beneficial light, the latter destruction and darkness. Life was regarded as a continual struggle between these two powers. Light is represented by fire and the sun, but fire plays a most important part. It is for this reason that the Zoroastrians are generally called fire-worshippers and sun-worshippers.

If Ahura Mazda (or Ormuzd) was not the only god, he was undoubtedly the greatest of the gods. He was the sky, he was light, he was symbolized by fire, but he had not and could not have an image.

His will was for good, and men gained or lost according as they observed or disobeyed his law. Zoroastrianism aims at the betterment of the self by right thinking, right speaking and right doing. A beautiful Zend formula calls men to humatem, hukhtem, huarestem--that is good thoughts, good words and good deeds. Whatever a man's condition may be--priest, warrior, farmer or a craftsman--he must follow the above maxim of good thoughts, good words and good deeds, if he wants to lead a pure life, and be immune from the evils of Ahirman.

Power of evil, that is Ahirman, fights against the creative will, and against the tendency of good. But Ahura Mazda directs and perfects the world which he has made, and the righteous are the saviours who aid him in the accomplishment of his work. Here we have a doctrine of progress and righteousness. Life becomes the battle-ground between the good and the evil. Evil may succeed for a time, but the ultimate victory lies with Ahura Mazda, and good people get their reward in heaven and the evil get their due in hell.

This simple Zoroastrian faith and worship was maintained with vigour in its pure state in the rugged uplands of Northern Afghanistan, among the hardy shepherds and cultivators, but when it travelled far into the west, that is in the country of Media, it underwent a change and was corrupted by Magism.

The principal feature of the Zoroastrian religion during the first period seems to be the acknowledgment and worship of one Supreme God, Ahura Mazda or Ormuzd, "the Lord of Heaven, the Giver of Heaven, and the Creator of Earth; He who disposes of thrones and dispenses happiness. From Ahura Mazda proceeds victory, conquest, safety, prosperity, and blessings of all kinds. The law of Ahura Mazda is the law of life; the protection of Ahura Mazda is the precious blessing for which prayer is constantly offered.

The sacred book of Zoroastrians is the Zend—Avesta, consisting of prayers and thanksgivings to Ahura Mazda and the good spirits. It was written in the sacred Zend language, one of the ancient Aryan languages.

Vistaspa (Gushtasp), like the Kianids, was engaged in constant wars with the Turanians and other non-Aryan elements, who were trying hard to break through the formidable lines set up by the Bactrian kings against the inroads of the barbarians. He personally took the field against them, and after inflicting heavy casualties on them forced them to retreat. Vistaspa thus earned the title of "Great" for himself. He beautified Balkh with the help of Zarir, his brother, and adorned it with some fine edifices.

After his death, Spintoo, entitled the wise (Istandiyar or Sa-fid-Dad) sat on the throne. He had inherited the warlike spirit and

genius of his illustrious father. Over his whole vast domain, extending as far as the valleys of Arghandab and Helmand, he made his power felt, while his influence extended beyond its limits, where nations feared and respected him. He was probably the last king of this line.

After him for a period of some five hundred years the history of Aryana is nearly blank. With the exceptions of one or two events, gleaned from the accounts of Greek writers, the very names of the kings of this long period are almost unknown to us. The first occasion on which Aryana makes a figure in Greek history is at the time when Bactria was invaded by Ninus, king of Assyria, with an army which bespoke the arduousness of the enterprise. According to Ctesias, as quoted by Didodorus Siculus, his force amounted to two millions (1,700,000 foot, 210,000 horse, and 10,600 chariots).

Oxyartes, king of Bactria, at the head of a large force (some 400,000 strong) made a stand against this host with indomitable courage, and gained some initial successes, killing over 100,000 Assyrians. But in the end the tide of battle turned in favour of the assailants upon the arrival of strong re-enforcements. The Bactrians were forced to retreat and seek refuge in their capital, where they were besieged by the invading force. The city was strong and vigorously defended, and Ninus despairing of success was about to call a retreat. But at this time, Semiramis, a lady of exceptional beauty and courage, who had joined her husband, Menon (or Oannes), an officer in the Assyrian army, proposed a plan of attack by which the city was taken. Her share in the exploit introduced her to the Emperor, and she became his queen and successor.

Shortly afterwards, when she came to the throne, she fitted out an expedition against India which terminated in her discomfiture. It so appears that Aryana, favoured by nature with rocky hills and inaccessible mountain fastness, suffered little from the ravages of the Assyrians, and was soon able to recover and assert its independence, which continued so until the reign of Cyrus the Great.

The second time when a mention is made of Aryana in these accounts, is at the time of Tiglath-Pilser, who became king of Assyria in 745 B. C. and reigned for a period of 18 years. He undertook to effect the restoration of the Assyrian Empire by a series of wars upon different fronts, seeking by his tireless energy to recover the losses occasioned by the imbecility of his predecessors. From one of his inscriptions discovered at Chalah we learn that he was able to extend his influence to the following provinces in the east of his empire: Narmi, Parsua, Zikratu, Nisae, and Arakutti. The last appears to be the same as Arakosia, or Arachosia, the country watered by the Arghandab and Helmand (modern province of Kandahar). It also appears that the Assyrian supremacy was soon shaken off, but the country was divided into a number of petty independent states, lacking the essential element of unity, and this made them an easy prey of foreign aggression in the middle of the sixth century B. C.

CHAPTER 5

The Achaeminids and Aryana

The rapid increase of the Aryan population in its primeval home led to the division of these primitive people into three branches—one, the Indo-Aryans, crossing the Hindukush, first settled in Eastern Afghanistan, whence gradually they entered the plains of the Five Rivers; second, dividing into a great number of tribes, chief among which were the Medes and Parsuas or Persians, moved west and overspread the plateau of Iran; while the third migrated into Europe in successive waves, as represented by the Pelasgic, Celtic, Teutonic, and Slavonic nations, whose descendants now occupy the greater part of Europe.

The Medes, migrating from the region of Central Asia, established themselves between Rhages and Ecbatana, that is in the north-west of modern Iran. Of their early history we know very little with the exception of this that they came under the influence of their powerful Semitic neighbours, the Assyrians, with whom

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they had frequent intercourse, and from whom they acquired the art of writing and much else besides. They were divided into several tribes; each governed by its own chieftain. Deioces was, perhaps, the first to unite them into a strong nation (about 715 B. C.). This centralized monarchy established in Media rapidly developed into a great military power and about 634 B. C. the Medes, under Phraortes, undertook an expedition against Nineveh, capital of the Assyrian Empire. But they were defeated with great loss in men and material, Phraortes himself being among the slain. Nevertheless the fact that the Medes had assumed the offensive was a potent cause of alarm, as it illustrated a new state of affairs in Asia, fully demonstrating that the great days of Assyrian supremacy were over, and she was no longer the arbitress of the destinies of nations in the East.

Cyaxares, the next Median king, led a second expedition against Assyria about 632 B. C. He defeated the Assyrians in the open field, and then laid siege to Nineveh, but was soon recalled to the defence of his own country in the east against a devastating barbarian torrent. This new danger was an irresistible inroad of the Scyths (or Scythians) from Central Asia, who had swept with destructive force over both Media and Assyria, thereby threatening the utter annihilation of the civilized world of Western Asia. Media, due to the mountainous character of the country, suffered less at the hands of these marauders than Assyria.

The weakness of Assyria and the exhaustion of her resources soon gave Cyaxares another chance to renew his attack on Nineveh, which now lay apparently at the mercy of any bold enemy ready to assail her. The gigantic power which had so long dominated Western Asia had now fallen into decay; her prestige was gone, her glory had departed, her army had lost in discipline, her defences had been weakened, and her morale and haughty spirit had been broken and shattered.

The last Assyrian king, Asshur-emid-ilin, prepared to defend his capital against the Medes. He kept a portion of his army

for himself, and sent Nabopolassar, his general, at the command of the remaining force, to check the advance of the Susianians, coming from the south. But Nabopolassar, proving a traitor, led a revolt of the Babylonians against the Assyrians. He at the same time sent an embassy to the Median king, and the result was a close alliance between Cyaxares and Nabopolassar, cemented by the marriage of the daughter of Cyaxares with Nabopolassar's son, Nebuchadnezzar.

The united armies of the Medes and Babylonians then advanced upon Nineveh and laid siege to it. The besieged made a bold and stubborn resistance for a full two years. But an unusually wet season in the third year of the siege caused an extraordinary rise in the Tigris, destroying more than two miles of outer fortifications, whereupon the Assyrian king, yielding to despair, made a huge funeral pile of all his richest furniture, and burnt himself with his concubines and eunuchs in his palace. The Medes and their allies jointly entered the city, and plundered it to their heart's content. The conquerors then divided the vast Assyrian Empire between themselves (612 B. C.).

Cyaxares, founder of the Median Empire, died in 584 B. C., and was succeeded by his son Astyages, who lacked his father's ability and energy. Born to the inheritance of a vast empire and bred in the luxury of a magnificent oriental court, he was apparently content with the lot which fortune seemed to have assigned to him. He was surrounded by guards and eunuchs, the latter holding most of the government offices. His long reign (from 584 to 550 B. C.), by sheer good luck, was peaceful until near its close, when occurred the event, which ended not only the reign of Astyages, but sealed the fate of the Median Empire as well. This blow was struck by Cyrus, king of the Persians.

The Parsuas (or Persians).—The Persians, the Aryan kinsmen of the Medes, at first inhabited the country to the west of the Lake Urmia. Like the Medes they, too, at this early stage, were governed by many chieftains, each of whom was the lord of a single town or a small mountain district. Shalmanersar II (858 to 823 B. C.), king of Assyria, says in one of his inscriptions that

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he took tribute from twenty-five such chiefs. His son and grandson received similar tokens of submission from these tribes. This inscription of the Assyrian king also brings to notice that the Persians at this time (middle of the ninth century) occupied a piece of territory to the south-west of Armenia, where they were in close contact with the Medes.

For almost about a century thereafter the Assyrian records say nothing of the Persians, until the reign of Sennacherib (705-681 B. C.) when they are found no longer in Armenia, but seem to have migrated beyond the Zagros, into the region north and north-east of Susiana (modern Fars), where they established their permanent home.

The Persians did not finish their migrations until near the end of the Assyrian period and perhaps did not form an organised monarchy until near the fall of Nineveh. The establishment of a powerful monarchy in the neighbouring country of Media in the seventh century, doubtless induced the Persians to follow the example of their kindred.

According to tradition their first king was Hakhamanish, a name the Greek historians changed into Achaemenian, whence comes the dynastic name of the Achaemenids. Certain writers have doubted the very existence of Hakhamanish. Even little is known of his successor, Teispes.

According to Herodotus, Persia (or Fars) under these early kings was absolutely under the domination of the Medes, who, having conquered it, imposed their yoke upon its people before 634 B. C. The Persian monarch at this stage was obliged to send his eldest son, the heir and crown-prince to Ecbatana to reside at the Median court as hostage for the faithful discharge of the duties of his father as a vassal king. Cambyses, the father of Cyrus the Great, was king of Persia from 600 to 559 B. C., and resided at Pasargadae; his capital; while his son, Cyrus, was a resident at the Median court at Ecbatana, where he was in high favour with the reigning

sovereign, Astyages. Some historians represent Cyrus as the grandson of Astyages, whose daughter Mendane was the wife of Cambyses, and the mother of Cyrus. It is said that Astyages once dreamt that there grew from the womb of his daughter Mendane, a vine, which spreading covered all the surface of Asia. Taking it as a bad omen, he was afraid to give his daughter to an influential noble, who might fulfil this dream. He, therefore, gave her to a Persian of good family, but of quiet temper. This was Cambyses.

Cyrus, while at the Median court, chafed under this indignity and resolved to liberate his country from the foreign yoke. He secretly communicated with his father for this purpose, but his father did not agree with him. So when he came to the throne of Persia (559 B. C.) he at once resolved to put his old plan in execution by putting an end to this state of vassalage. After repeated defeats, the Persians made a final stand at Pasargadae, their capital, where in two great battles, they totally destroyed the power of Astyages. All the Median royal insignia fell into the hands of the victorious Persian king. Astyages sought safety in flight; his army dispersed, and most of his followers joined the victors. He was hotly pursued by the triumphant foe, who, forcing him to an engagement, again defeated him, and took him prisoner. The Median Empire thus received its death-blow. Media and all its dependencies at once submitted to Cyrus, who thus became the founder of the Achaemenian Empire which was the dominant power in Asia for the next two centuries (558 to 331 B. C.).

Cyrus is said to have been forty years of age when he triumphed over Astyages. With dominion came riches and the wealth of the Assyrian kings looted by Cyaxares. With an insatiable ambition and more than ordinary ability, Cyrus aimed at universal domination. Having first become master of all Asia Minor and Lydia, he turned his attention towards the east. Herodotus states that the conqueror now subdued the Bactirans and Sacans in Central Asia. Ctesias tells us that the Bactrians were among the best soldiers of the east, and that when Cyrus invaded their country, they made a heroic stand. Several indecisive battles were fought, and the Bactrians were not subdued by force.

Herodotus also informs us that Cyrus about this time took a number of other countries in this part of Asia, namely, Hyrcania, Parthia, Chormasia, Sogdiana, Aira, Drangiana, Aracosia, Sattagydia, and Gandaria. Pliny tells us that Cyrus destroyed Capisa, north of Kabul, where he is said to have met a stubborn resistance and sustained heavy casualties. Tradition states that Cyrus on one occasion penetrated Gedrosia (modern Baluchistan), and that he lost his army in the waterless desert of that region. The conquest of Aryana, the immense region between the Caspian and the Indus, occupied by a valiant and freedom-loving people, may very likely have employed Cyrus five to six years (549 to 545 B. C.). Alexander the Great, two centuries later, was also occupied for four long years in reducing the same region (330 to 326 B. C.).

Herodotus further tells us that in 529 B. C. Cyrus led an expedition against the Massagetae, a Scythian tribe, whose country lay on the north-eastern border of his empire, across the Jaxartes, and defeated them in a great battle by strategem, but was himself afterwards defeated and slain, his body having fallen into the enemy's hands. It is said that Cyrus had offered marriage to Thomyris, the queen of the Massagetae. The proposal was rejected with scorn, so Cyrus led his army against her, and by foul play, succeeded in killing one of the queen's sons, but he was ultimately defeated and slain. The queen in revenge for the death of her son, caused the head of the mighty Persian king to be cut off and thrown into a skin (or tray) filled with the blood of the Persian soldiers, saying, as she thus insulted the corpse: "I live, and have conquered thee in fight and thus I give thee thy fill of blood. Take till your thirst for bloodshed is satiated."

Ctesias, on the other hand tells us that the people against whom Cyrus led his last expedition were the Derbices, a nation on the border of India (probably natives of Eastern Afghanistan). These Derbices encountered Cyrus, who was defeated and mortally wounded. Xenophon tells us that Cyrus died peacefully in his bed at Pasargadae.

This conflict of opinion among the Greek historians is indeed perplexing and throws a veil of uncertainty over the closing scene

of the great founder of the Achaemenian Empire. It is probable that Cyrus lost his life in an expedition against a nation on the northeastern portion of his empire in the year 529 B. C., after a reign of 29 years. It is certain that his body did not fall into the enemy's possession from the fact that it was conveyed into Persia and buried at Pasargadae, where his tomb stands to this day.

Cyrus, just before his death, with a view to guard against a disputed succession, left the inheritance of his great empire to his elder son, Cambyses, and entrusted the actual government of several large and important provinces in the east to his younger son, Smerdis. But no sooner was Cambyses seated on the throne, than he grew jealous of his brother, and ordered him to be privately put to death.

Cambyses for the most part of his reign was busy with the conquest of Egypt. Having completed the subjugation of that country, he started on his return to Persia. When he reached Syria, he received the news that during his absence a pretender, whose real name was Gomatas, and who had now declared himself to be Smerdis, son of Cyrus, had occupied the throne. Cambyses, in his momentary despondency at the unexpected news, committed suicide (522 B. C.).

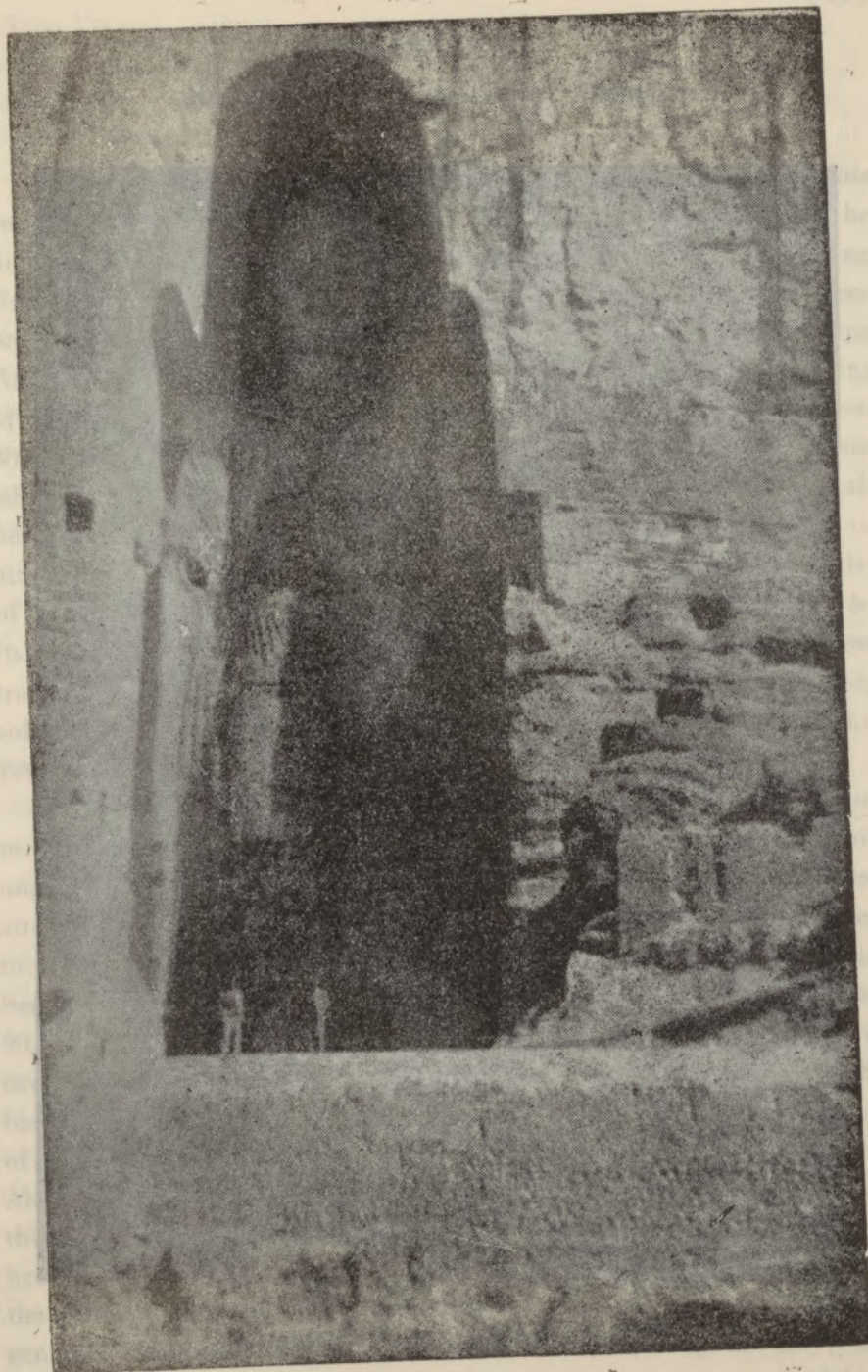
The death of Cambyses left the pretender at liberty to perfect his plans. The Pseudo-Smerdis, to strengthen his position, married all the widows of Cambyses. But being afraid to show his face, lest he might be recognized, he shut himself up in the royal seraglio, never leaving the place, nor permitting any of the Persian nobles to approach him. In consequence of this isolation the previous suspicion developed into a general national belief that the king who occupied the throne was not Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, but a usurper and an imposter. All discontent for a time was smothered by a systematic reign of terror. The arrival of Darius, son of Hystaspes, a prince of the royal blood at the capital at such a time, was a signal for the general rising which was to hurl the pretender from the throne. Darius, placing himself at the head of the plotters, entered the palace, and overpowered and killed the pretender after a short struggle.

Darius Hystaspes ascended the throne in 521 B.C. His reign was soon disturbed by revolts in different parts of the empire. For six long years Darius was employed in quelling these risings, and in reducing province after province. From 516 to 507 B.C. he was busy in the east, in the region of the Upper Indus, fighting the Gandharis. His inscriptions at Behistun include the Indus valley in his empire. He is said to have sent an expedition under a Greek mercenary, Skylax, to explore the Indus down to its mouth. This expedition took two years and a half.

Darius then proceeded to Susa, his capital, where he had built the great palace, whose remains were discovered recently. Darius and his successor knowing very well that Aryana would in no way co-operate with a foreign power, decided to weaken the country by dividing it into various satrapies, each under a separate governor entrusted with the collection and transmission of revenue, the administration of justice, the preservation of order, and the general supervision of the satrapy. These governors enjoyed an almost independent authority, frequently transmitting provinces, like hereditary fiefs, to their heirs, and sometimes defying the sovereign or their brother satraps in open war.

It is also evident that their hold on Aryana grew feeble with the advance of time. This state of affairs continued till the reign of Darius the Third (or Darius Codomannus), the last of the Achaemenids, when the Persian Empire was attacked by a new power, which had suddenly risen into prominence on its north-western frontier.

In 336 B.C. Alexander the Great became king of Macedonia upon the assassination of his father, Philip. After the battle of Marathon, the final struggle between Greece and Persia was only a question of time, but the lavish and liberal employment of Persian gold delayed the inevitable for more than a century and a half.



Bamiyan : 53 Meters² High Buddha



Kabul Museum : Ivory Statue

Bunyan : 53 Meters High Buddha

CHAPTER 6

Alexander the Great and Aryana.

At the time of his father's death Alexander was in his twentieth year, being born in 356 B. C. At this tender age he announced his intention of prosecuting his father's plan of plunging right into the of heart unknown Asia. Having put the affairs of Greece on a satisfactory footing, he marched for the Hellespont, leaving Antipater regent of Macedonia in his absence. In the spring of 334 B. C., he, with his thirty-five thousand troops (about 30,000 foot and 5,000 horse) crossed the strait at a place which Xerxes had passed less than a century and a half before. Such was the force with which he now proposed to attack the immense but ill-cemented Persian Empire. The inferiority of the Greek army in numbers was, however, out-balanced by its superior efficiency and its high morale. It consisted of veteran troops in the highest possible condition of discipline, and every soldier was animated by the most enthusiastic devotion to his youthful leader and was confident of victory.

Had the Persians made a serious attempt in the beginning to stem the tide, it is probable that Alexander's invasion of Asia might have been prevented. But unfortunately the first earnest attempt was made only at the time when the Macedonians wanted to cross the Granicus, a little river in Mysia, flowing into the Sea of Marmora. Here the Persian generals, with a force of some 20,000 Greek mercenaries, and about an equal number of native cavalry, were prepared to dispute the passage of the river. In the battle that ensued the Persians were totally defeated. In consequence of this defeat the Persians were thrown on the defensive, and Alexander's conquest of Asia Minor was its immediate result. At this critical juncture, when Alexander was advancing towards the heart of the Persian Empire, the untimely death of Memnon, the Persian admiral, deprived Darius of the services of his ablest general, who collecting a large fleet, was preparing to carry the war into Greece itself, and thus compel Alexander to withdraw from Asia Minor.

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In the spring of 333 B.C. Alexander resumed his onward march. He advanced through Cappodocia without meeting any serious resistance, and forcing his way through the passes of Mount Taurus, he descended into the plains of Cilicia. He continued his march along the coast to Mallus, where he first got the news of the Persian army, some 700,000 strong, and commanded by Darius in person who had come with a view to stopping further advance of the Macedonians. Alexander, losing no time, met them on the plain of Issus. But, hemmed in in a narrow defile between the mountain, the river and the sea Darius was entirely deprived of the advantage of his numerical superiority. Alexander, leading his right wing in person came within shot of the Persian arrows. Here he gave order to charge. The Macedonians rushed impetuously forward, waded the river and were soon engaged in a hand to hand fight with their enemy, who were easily put to rout. But what chiefly decided the fate of the day was the timidity of Darius himself, who on beholding the defeat of his left wing, took to flight with such haste that his mother, wife and children were made prisoners by Alexander, who, however, treated them with great honour.

The defeat was followed by the conquest of Syria, Phoenicia and Egypt. In the spring of 331 B.C., Alexander retraced his triumphant march through Syria. After crossing the Euphrates at Thapsacus, about the end of August, he struck to the north-east through a fertile and well-supplied country. Here he learnt that Darius was encamped with his host on one of the extensive plains between the Tigris and the mountains of Kurdistan, near a village called Gagumela. The town of Arbela, after which the battle that ensued is commonly called, lay about twenty miles away, where Darius had deposited his baggage and treasure. Alexander, after giving his army a few days rest, set out to meet the enemy soon after midnight, in order that he might come up with them about daybreak. On ascending some sand-hills the whole array of the Persians suddenly burst upon the view of the Macedonians, at a distance of three to four miles. Darius, as usual, had occupied the centre, surrounded by his body-guard and chosen troops. In front of the royal pavilion were ranged the chariots and elephants. Alexander spent the day in reconnoitering the ground and preparing for attack. But he was so confident of his victory that next morning

when his officers came to receive final instructions, they found him in a deep slumber. The Persians, on the other hand, fearful of being surprised, had stood under arms the whole night, so that the morning found them exhausted and dispirited.

Alexander following his usual tactics once more succeeded in breaking through the Persian line by an impetuous charge. Darius, seeing this, rode a fleet horse and took to flight. His example was followed by the whole army. So long as the daylight lasted the Persians were hotly pursued, Thousands of them perished in the attempt to cross the river, Greater Zab, which lay in their way.

After resting his men for a few hours Alexander continued the pursuit of the fugitive king in the hope of overtaking him at Arbela. The Persian monarch, on the other hand, continued his flight without a break, leaving the royal baggage and treasure in the hands of the victors. The battle of Arbela may safely be regarded as the death-blow inflicted on the Achaemenian Empire.

Although this battle sealed the fate of the Persian Empire, the war dragged on, and the reduction of the north-eastern and eastern provinces of the Empire, which constituted Aryana proper, occupied Alexander and his army, though flushed with victory, several long and tedious years.

Finding any further pursuit of Darius for the time being hopeless, Alexander directed his march towards Babylon and made his triumphant entry into the city without the slightest opposition. Here he rewarded his army with huge sums of money drawn from the Persian treasures which had fallen into his hands. After indulging for some time in luxury, he was again in motion (towards the middle of November) for Susa. It was here that most of the Persian treasures were stored. The city surrendered without a blow. The treasure found there amounted to 40,000 talents in gold and silver bullion, and 9000 in gold Darics. At Susa Alexander received reinforcements of about 15,000 men from Greece. He then directed his march south-east towards Persepolis, which was the real capital of the Persian kings, though they generally resided at Susa during the winter, and Ecabatana in summer. The treasure found here far

exceeded that of Babylon and Susa put together, and it is said to have amounted to 120,000 talents, or nearly Pound 30,000. It was here that Alexander is related to have committed an act of senseless folly by setting fire with his own hand to the ancient and magnificent palace of the Persian kings, the ruins of which stand to this day. Thus within three or four years the grand edifice of the empire founded by Cyrus the Great crumbled to the ground, and Alexander was able to establish himself firmly on the Persian throne.

After the battle of Arbela Darius made for Ecbatana, where he stayed for a short time to watch the turn of events. From Persepolis Alexander, resuming the pursuit, came to Ecbatana, where he learned that the king had already left for the east. Leaving the major part of his army behind, he, with his main body, pursued Darius by forced marches. Such was the rapidity of the march that many men and horses died of fatigue. At Rhagae he heard that Darius had already passed the defile called the "Caspian Gates" leading into the Bactrian province; and as this was fifty miles distant, urgent pursuit was evidently useless. He therefore allowed his troops five days' rest, and then resumed his march. Soon after he got the news that Dereius had been seized and loaded with chains by Bessus, governor of Bactria, who entertained the design of establishing himself in Bactria as an independent sovereign. This intelligent accelerated his speed. On the fourth day he was able to overtake the fugitives with his cavalry, having been obliged to leave his infantry behind. The enemy, who did not know his real strength, were struck with consternation at his appearance and fled precipitately. Bessus and his adherents now endeavoured to persuade Darius to fly with them, and provided a fleet horse for the purpose. But the Persian monarch, it so appears, preferred to fall into the hands of Alexander, whereupon the conspirators moratally wounded him in his chariot and took to flight. Darius expired before Alexander could come. He came only in time to find him dead in his chariot, transfixd by the spears of his satraps. Alexander, affected deeply by this scene, covered the dead body with his own mantle, and directed that a

magnificent funeral procession should convey it to Pasargadae, where it was interred with royal honours.

After reducing Hyrcania, Alexander undertook an expedition against the Mardians, a warlike tribe in the western part of Hyrcania, who, thinking themselves secure in the midst of their forests and mountains, refused to make their submission. After chastising the Mardians, Alexander pursued his march eastwards. On reaching Susia (modern Tus), on the confines of Aeria, it was his intention to go straight to Bactria and pursue Bessus, who had by now succeeded in establishing an independent kingdom in that province. But the revolt of Satibarzanes, the satrap of Aeria, compelled him to pay his immediate attention to that quarter, as it was thought dangerous to leave an enemy in such a strong position behind on his line of communication.

At the time of Alexander's invasion of Aryana, the country had no political unity, and exhibited conditons of internal discord, weakness and chaos. The rulers of the various provinces were too jealous to unite against the common foe or to select a generalissimo. In spite of this drawback, it took Alexander four to five years to break the isolate resistance of these warlike people, and then to be in a position to turn his attention to India.

From Susia Alexander advanced towards Artacoana, the capital of the Aerial province. Here he founded a new city on the banks of the Arius (the Hari Rud), called after him Alexander Arioum, and which under the name of Herat is one of the chief cities of modern Afghanistan. Thence he proceeded southwards to Prophthasia (probably present Farah,) the capital of Drangiana or Zaranka (modern Seistan). Here his stay was signalized by a supposed conspiracy against his life by Philotas, son of Parmenio, one of his trusted generals. Alexander had long entertained suspicion of Philotas. While in Egypt, Alexander had discovered that Philotas had spoken disrespectfully of his exploits, and had boasted that without the aid of his father and himself, Alexander would never have achieved his conquests.

He had also ridiculed the oracle respecting Alexander's supernatural birth, and had more recently opposed the inclination which that monarch now began to display in assuming all the pomp and state of a Persian king. But the immediate subject of accusation against him was that he had not reported a conspiracy which he knew was being formed against Alexander's life. He was consequently suspected of being implicated in it; and on being put to torture, he not only confessed his own guilt, but also involved his father. Philotas was executed, and an order was sent to Ecabatana, where Parmenio then was, directing that the veteran general was to be immediately put to death. A letter purporting to be from his son was handed to him; and while the old general was busy reading it, Polydamas, one of his intimate friends, with some other officers of high rank, fell upon him and cut him to pieces. His head was severed from the body and despatched to Alexander.

From Prophthasia Alexander advanced eastwards towards the banks of the Etamadrus (the Helmand of today), where he met a people variously called-Eurgetas, Agroaspae, Armiaspi, Aryaspa, or Aryaswas (the riders of excellent steeds) From the country of the Eurgetae (probably modern Girishk) Alexander proceeded towards Arachosia, the country round Kandahar, watered by the Arkandab (now Arghandab). Here he met a people called Arachoti. After subduing these people he laid the foundation of a second Alexandria, (Alexandria Arachosion) which is perhaps the modern city of Kandahar.

Alexander then wanted to find a way across the Hazara country to Bactria. He was soon forced to give up this plan on account of the rugged nature of the country, and decided to follow the comparatively easier route via Zabulistan (modern Ghazni). Here he is said to have met a very stiff resistance at the hands of the warlike races inhabiting this part of the country, and to have suffered heavy losses in men and material. On reaching Ortospanum (probably modern Kabul) he appears to have moved without much delay towards the Koh Daman (Paropamisadae or Capisa), where at

the foot of the lofty mountains — Paropamisus — called Caucasus by the Greeks (now Hindukush), he founded a third city in Aryana, called Alexandria ad Caucasum (Alexandria-under - the Caucasus,) which he is said to have garrisoned with a contingent of Macedonians troops. Opinions differ as to the site where this city stood. Some have identified it with the modern town of Charikar, while others locate it at Houpian (Hopina, or present Opian) three miles west of Charikar, the foot of the Khwaja Sayyaran Hills. Parwan Darah (modern Jabalus Siraj) and even Bagram have also been suggested as the original site of this Greek city. Other important Greek settlements were established at Cartana and Cadrusi.

But having reached Capisa in winter alexander could not make an immediate advance upon Bactria, for the passes leading across the Hindukush were all blocked with snow. He waited there to pass the winter, till the spring should unlock the passes. In the spring as soon as the snow was melted enough to make the passes of the Hindukush practicable, Alexander moved northwards with a view to reaching Bactria, where Bessus was reported to have collected a large army. He thought it advisable to beat this opposition before leaving for India. During his passage over this lofty range covered with deep snow even in spring, the Macedonians suffered a good deal, both on account of cold and scarcity of fuel and provisions.

Alexander on entering Bactria did not meet any serious opposition, for Bessus, on learning that he was coming in that direction with a strong force, had decided to go to Sogdiana. Early in the summer of 328 B. C., Alexander followed him across the Oxus. Bessus was shortly afterwards betrayed by Spitamenes, commander of the Sogdian cavalry, and was handed over to Alexander, who had him put to death in a most cruel and barbarous manner.

Alexander marching north took Marcanda (now Samarkand), the capital of Sogdiana, from where he advanced to the river Jaxartes (Sir Darya), which he designed to make the eastern

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boundary of his empire. On the bank of this river he founded the city of Alexandria Eschate (the Extreme or Farthest), probably the modern city of Khojend, lying 3,500 miles east of Macedonia. Not content with this he crossed the river and defeated the Scythians. At this time he got the news that Spitamenes rebelling had besieged Samarkand. A division was despatched immediately to cope with the situation. But it was cut to pieces by Spitamenes in the valley of Zarafshan. Alexander was, therefore, compelled to make a hasty retreat towards Sogdiana. He had little difficulty in quelling this rising. He then retired to Zariaspa in Bactria to pass the winter. It was here that he received strong re-enforcements from Macedonia.

In the following year Alexander again crossed the Oxus. this time he divided his army into five columns. With the troops under his command he marched against a fortress called the Sogdian Rock, perched on a steep isolated hill, so precipitous as to be deemed impregnable, and so well-supplied with provisions as to defy a protracted blockade. The summons to surrender was treated with derision by the commander of the fort, who enquired sarcastically whether the invaders had wings. But they had soon to repent for their pride, for a small group of the Macedonians succeeded in scaling some heights overhanging the fortress, and this so disheartened the garrison, that opening the gates, they surrendered themselves to the besiegers. Among the prisoners was a girl of surpassing beauty, Roxana (or Roshana), daughter of Oxyartes, a Bactrian noble, whom Alexander made the partner of his throne, and appointed her father the governor of Paropamisadae.

After reducing the rest of the fortresses in Sogdiana, Alexander returned to Bactria (327 B. C.), and began to prepare for his projected invasion of India. He collected a large army (some 120,000 foot and 15,000 horse), mostly from among the people of Aryana itself. "Here were troops of horsemen, representing the chivalry of Bactria, Pashtus (Pushtuns) and men of the Hindukush, with their highland-bred horses, people who could ride and shoot at the same time."

While he was busy with these preparations a second plot was set on foot against his life. This time the royal body-guard together with their leader, Hermolaus, had conspired against him. But the plot was discovered in time and the ringleaders had to pay with their lives. These repeated conspiracies against the life of Alexander clearly indicated that either he was no longer popular with his own people, or that they were sick of his constant wars and expeditions.

While still at Balkh, Alexander was in communication with the rulers of Northern India. Envoys from Ambhi, Raja of Tashasila (Taxila) made their way over the ridges of the Hindukush to Bactria. They brought the message that Ambhi was ready to march by Alexander's side as soon as he reached India. Early in 327 B. C. Alexander crossed the Hindukush and came to Alexandria ad Caucasum, where he made a short stay. He then moved towards the town of Nicaea, in the Kabul valley. On arriving there he sent a message to the Raja of Taxila and other princes of Northern India to arrange a meeting in the Kabul Valley.

Before setting out on his Indian expedition, Alexander sacrificed to the Greek goddess, Athena. After crossing the Kupper (the Kabul), he took the upper route via Laghman and Kunar. All along this route lay the hills whose inhabitants in their rock-citadels were unschooled in recognising an overlord. But it was not Alexander's way to leave the tribes enroute unsubdued. He therefore broke his army into two divisions. One was entrusted to Hephaestion and Perdiccas, who were to move to the Indus along the southern bank of the Kabul river, while the other, led by the king himself, turned up into the hills. These two divisions were to meet each other upon the Indus.

It is not possible to follow the tract of Alexander's march over the hills with any precision. But we know this much definitely that the tough highlanders of the Balkans met the stiffest resistance they had experienced so far. Everywhere on this line fighting was of exceptional ferocity. At one place when Alexander was severely

wounded, the monarch was so enraged, that the whole population was put to the sword. At another place we hear of a huge massacre, some 40, 000 tribesmen being killed. At a third place, when the town surrendered, it was agreed that the besieged should transfer their services to Alexander. But they did not like to serve the foreigners whose hands were stained with the blood of their brethren. They determined to slip away at the first opportunity. The plot was, however, discovered, and all of them were ruthlessly massacred.

The loot in cattle in these regions was enormous, and we are told that a herd of the finest animals was actually sent to Macedonia to improve the breeds there.

After crossing the Sawat valley, Alexander stormed the fortress of Aornos, not far from modern Amb. The fortress was built on an isolated mass of rock some 6, 770 feet high, flat on the top, having great precipitous sides, which on the south went down straight to the river Indus. According to Arrian, it was ascended by a single path cut by the hand of man, yet difficult. On the summit of the rock there was plenty of pure water, which gushed out from a copious spring. There was timber besides, and as much good arable land as required for its cultivation the labour of a thousand men. Alexander on learning these particulars was seized with an ardent desire to capture this mountain also.

Diodorus describes the rock as a natural stronghold, 100 stadia in circumference, 16 stadia in height, and with a level surface forming a complete circle. The Indus washed its foot on the south; elsewhere it was surrounded by deep ravines and inaccessible cliffs. An old man familiar with the neighbourhood promised against a reward to take Alexander up the difficult ascent to a position which would command the barbarians in occupation of the rock.

Following his guidance, Alexander first seized the pass leading to the rock, and as there was no other exit from it, blocked up the barbarians. He then filled up the ravine which lay at the foot of the rock with a mound and getting thus nearer vigorously pushed the siege by assaults made for seven days and nights without intermission.

(To be Continued)

At first the "barbarians" had the advantage owing to the greater height of their position. But when the mound was completed and catapults and other engines had been brought into action, the "barbarians" were struck with despair and escaped from the rock at night by the pass from which Alexander had on purpose withdrawn the guard he had left there. Thus Alexander secured the rock without risk.

After the fall of this fortress Alexander rejoined the second division led by Hesperæstion and Perdikkas on the bank of the Indus, who had arrived there before him and had made all the preparations for the passage of that great river. The place at which the bridge was built was, by the most recent opinion, Ohind, about 16 miles above the modern Attock. Here the Græeks felt that they were crossing the threshold of a new world. Sacrifices to the gods, games and races in their honour, marked the occasion. The diviners announced that the omens were favourable. In the early dawn one day in the spring of 326 B. C. began the crossing of this river.

On this occasion Ambhi, the Raja of Taxila, sent his homage to Alexander, and shortly afterwards he himself went out to meet him at the head of his forces. King Ambhi, known to the Greeks as Omphis or Taxiles (apparently a territorial title) was at war not only with the powerful kingdom of Porus (Paura-va) on the other side of the Jehlum, but with the neighbouring Hill State of Abhisara as well, and it was probably in the hope of securing Alexander's help against his rivals that he had sent an embassy to wait upon the Macedonian king first at Balkh, and then at Und (Ohind or Udabhandā), and finally he himself came out with his troops to meet the conqueror. After entertaining him lavishly at his capital, Taxila, the Raja provided Alexander with a contingent of his forces, some 5,000 in number, for his expedition against Porus. In return for these services and friendly acts Ambhi was not only confirmed in the possession of his own territories, but was also rewarded by the accession of new ones

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At Takshacila (Taxila) the Greeks for the first time saw the Brahman Yogis, or "the wise men of the Indians," as they call them, and were astonished at their asceticism and strange doctrines.

Alexander now refreshed his army and sent a prompt summons for surrender to Porus, king of the Panjab. But that proud and brave prince met his demand with a defiant retort, and at the same time barred the passage of the Jehlum (Hydaspes) with a numerous and well-organised force. So when Alexander came forward with a view to cross the river, he found a formidable obstacle in his way. The Jehlum was then in full flood and the opposite bank was vigilantly guarded by a strong force commanded by Porus in person.

For some days the two armies lay opposite each other. At last under the cover of dark night and a violent storm Alexander was able to convey his troops across the river, some sixteen miles above his camp. An obstinate battle ensued. The real strength of Porus' army lay in his elephants, some 200 in number, the sight and smell of which frightened the horses of the Macedonian cavalry. But these unweildy animals proved as dangerous to the Indians as to the Greeks; for when driven to a narrow space they became unmanageable and took to their heels, creating great confusion in the ranks of Porus. The Greeks taking advantage of this made a few vigorous charges. As a result of these the Indians were totally routed, with a loss of 12,000 killed and 9,000 prisoners. Among the latter was Porus himself, who had fought bravely and was badly wounded. He was conducted into the presence of Alexander. The courage which the Raja had displayed in the battlefield had excited the admiration of the conqueror, who asked if the Raja had any request to make. "None," was the reply. "And how would you like to be treated?" asked the King. "Like a king should treat a king," was the short reply. "And you have no other request to make?" asked Alexander. "No", answered Porus, "everything is comprehended in the word king." Struck by his noble spirit Alexander not only restored him to his dominions, but also considerably enlarged them, seeking by these means to turn the vanquished foe into a faithful and obedient ally.

Beating down the opposition of various other tribes of the Panjab, Alexander penetrated the land as far as the banks of the Beas (Hyphasia). Here Macedonian army, worn out by fatigue and dangers, positively refused to proceed any farther, although Alexander passionately desired to attack a monarch still more powerful than Porus (probably the Raja of Kanauj), whose dominions, he had heard, lay beyond that river. But all his attempts to induce his soldiers to proceed proved ineffectual. The refusal was so insistent as to practically verge on mutiny. He therefore submitted with good grace and gave the order for retreat, having first erected twelve colossal altars on the banks of the river to mark the eastern boundary of his conquests.

From there Alexander returned to his newly founded cities of Nicae and Bucephala on the Hydaspes, where he divided his army into three detachments. He himself embarked at the head of one of them and sailed down the Indus. The navigation lasted several months, but was accomplished without any serious opposition, except from the tribe of Malli (or Malavae) in the vicinity of modern Multan. In storming one of their strongholds Alexander was severely wounded, and was so enraged that he ordered every living being within the place to be put to the sword.

On arriving at the mouth of the Indus, Alexander explored its estuaries. Nearchus, with the fleet, was directed to sail to the Persian Gulf, while he himself proceeded with his contingent in the autumn of 326 B.C. through the burning deserts of Gedrosia (present Baluchistan) towards Persia. The march through this inhospitable region lasted sixty days, during which many of the soldiers perished from fatigue or disease.

Alexander entered Babylonia in the spring of 324 B.C. where ambassadors from various countries had assembled to pay him homage. His mind was still occupied with the plans of conquest. His next design was the subjugation of Arabia. Preparations were made, solemn sacrifices offered to the gods, and banquets were arranged previous to departure. At one of these feasts Alexander drank deep. Soon after he was taken with fever. For some days he neglected the disorder. But on the eleventh day the malady proved fatal, and he expired on the 28th of June 323 B.C., at the early age of 33.

CHAPTER 7

The Graeco-Bactrian Kingdoms.

Alexander left nothing solid behind. Like a meteor he came and disappeared, leaving behind little of himself but a memory. He had no time to consolidate the vast empire which he had conquered by his sword within the space of ten years.

On the day of his death, a military council was held to decide on the future line of action. Alexander had left no issue; the empire was therefore divided among his generals. Perdikkas, to whom Alexander is said to have given his signet-ring on his death-bed, was now chosen Regent, pending the birth of an heir, for Roxana was pregnant. But there was no central power, nor the grip of a master hand to keep these ambitious generals together. Besides, Alexander's invasion had awakened nationalities, each trying to assert its independence.

Perdikkas possessed more power than any other of Alexander's generals, but being ambitious he aimed at supreme power, which ultimately proved his ruin. His designs were not unknown to the other generals, such as Antigonos and Ptolemy; and when he attempted to bring Antigonos to trial for some trifle offence in the government of his satrapy, that general made good his escape to Macedonia, where he revealed to Antipater the full extent of the ambitious schemes of Perdikkas. A league was formed that declared war against the Regent. Thus assailed on all sides, Perdikkas resolved to direct his arms, in the first instance against Ptolemy, governor of Egypt. In the spring of 321 B.C. he accordingly went out on his march against Egypt at the head of a formidable force, accompanied by Philip Arrhidaeus, Alexander's halfbrother, Roxana, and her infant son, Alexander. He advanced without opposition as far as Pelusium, where he found the banks of the Nile strongly fortified and vigorously guarded by Ptolemy. Repeated attempts on the part of Perdikkas to force his passage across the river failed with great loss. In his last attempt near Memphis he lost great numbers of his men by the depth and rapidity of the current. Perdikkas due to his haughty spirit, was never

A dark, grainy, black and white photograph showing the lower legs and feet of a person. The person appears to be walking on a textured, possibly sandy or gravelly surface. The image is very dark and has a high level of contrast, making it difficult to discern fine details. The legs are positioned in a way that suggests forward motion.

Kabul Museum: Greek Bronze, Cavalier
or Conductor of Chriot, First Century

CHAPTER 7

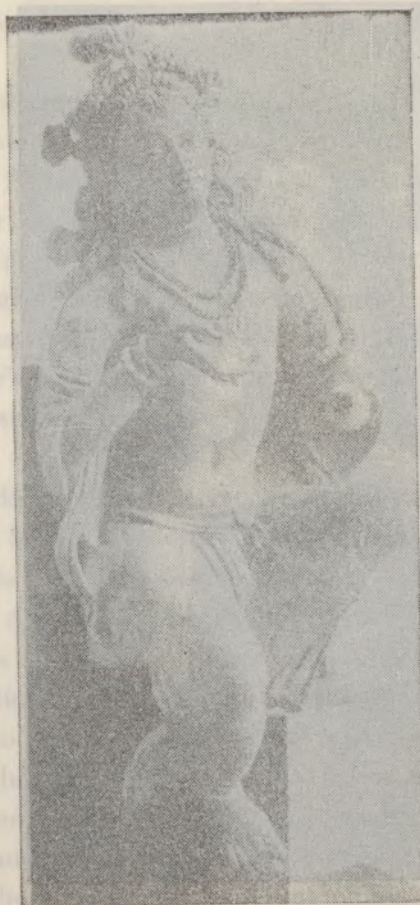
The Greco-Bactrian Kingdoms.

Alexander left nothing solid behind. Like a meteor he came and disappeared, leaving behind little of himself but a memory. He had no time to consolidate the vast empire which he had conquered by his sword.

On the day after his death, the empire was divided into three parts. Alexander's empire was now in the hands of his generals. The empire was now in the hands of his generals.

Perdiccas, his general, was the first to attempt to bring the empire back to its former state. He attempted to bring the empire back to its former state.

Perdiccas, the Regent, then marched against Egypt at the head of a large army. He advanced without opposition, where he found the lands of the Nile strongly fortified and vigorously guarded by Ptolemy. Repeated attempts on the part of Perdiccas to force his passage across the river failed with great loss. In his last attempt near Memphis he lost great numbers of his men by the depth and rapidity of the current. Perdiccas, due to his hangover, was never



Kabul Museum: Foundukistan Room
Female Figure, 7th Century

popular with the army, and now these set-backs made him all the more detestable. A conspiracy was formed against him, and some of the officers, entering the camp, murdered him.

His death was followed by a second division of the empire. Antipater was selected Regent, retaining the government of Macedonia and Greece; Ptolemy was continued in the government of Egypt; Seleucus, a young officer who had taken a prominent part in the wars against Perdiccas, received the satrapy of Babylon: whilst Antigonus, not only retained his old province, but was rewarded with that of Susiana as well.

Antipater did not long survive these events. Soon after his death a second civil war broke out. This time fortune favoured Antigonus, who in 315 B.C., was the master of all the countries from the Mediterranean to Bactria. It was now his turn to aspire after supreme power. Seleucus turned out of his satrapy, had to take refuge in Egypt with Ptolemy. Three years later they were able to defeat Demetrius, son of Antigonus. Seleucus re-entering Babylonia was hailed as "Saviour" Here he founded the dynasty, which bears his name, the Seleucids (October 1, 312 B.C.)

Seleucus, entitled Nicator or Conqueror, now set to consolidate his position by annexing all the eastern provinces which formed parts of Alexander's empire. Not content with these he had also designs on India, and wanted to complete the conquest of that sub-continent, which Alexander was not destined to do. But by the time he was able to make his position secure so as to be able to turn his attention to the extreme east, a new ruler had arisen in India. This was Chandragupta, or as the Greeks call him Sandracutta, the founder of the Mauryan dynasty, who had by now made himself master of the whole of northern India.

Advancing by the route along the Kabul river, Seleucus crossed the Indus into India (between 305 and 302 B.C.). It is said that Chandragupta put into the field more than half a million men, with 9,000 war-elephants, and a large number of chariots. The details of this expedition are not very clear to us; even the date is variously put betw-

een 305 and 302 B.C. But this much we know that Seleucus was reduced to make a hasty and humiliating peace with Chandragupta under the terms of which all the Macedonian provinces as far as the Hindukush (the satrapies of Arachosia and the Paropamisadae, with at least some portion of Gedrosia and Aeria) were ceded to the Indian monarch. He is also said to have given his daughter in marriage to Chandragupta. The hasty conclusion of the peace by which Seleucus received only 500 elephants in exchange for so vast a tract, was probably due to a call of help from the west, where his colleagues Cassander, Lysimachus and Ptolemy were hard pressed by Antigonus.

He knew that if he allowed Antigonus to triumph over his comrades, his own turn would not be long in coming. His troops of elephants stood him in good stead in the great battle fought at Ipsus (in Phrygia) in 301 B. C., which was to decide the fate of the civil war broken out just after the death of Alexander the Great. Antigonus was killed in the action, his army completely routed, and his vast dominions shared by the victors.

By the terms of the agreement Seleucus was recognised as monarch of all the Greek conquests in Asia, with the sole exceptions of Lower Syria and Asia Minor. The monarchy thus established extended from the Holy Land and the Mediterranean on the west to the Indus valley in the east, and from the Caspian and Jaxartes to the Persian Gulf. Babylon was Seleucus' first capital, and there his court was held for some years, previous to his march against Antigonus. Later on he founded, and built with great rapidity, the city of Seleucia on the Tigris, where he transferred his capital. But after Ipsus a further change was made. Antioch arose in extraordinary beauty and magnificence during the first few years that followed Ipsus, and Seleucus made it his capital. But the change weakened the ties which bound the Empire together, and loosened the grasp of the government on the more distant provinces.

On the death of Seleucus in 281 B. C., his dominions fell to the lot of his son, Antiochus I, surnamed Soter, the Saviour. It was in the reign of Antiochus II (or Theos), the grandson of Seleucus, who reigned from 261 to 246 B. C. that Bactria and Parthia made themselves independent.

Alexander the Great, after he took Bactria, had appointed Artabazus, governor of the province. But being advanced in age, Artabazus was not long to enjoy his post. He was succeeded by Amyntas. During the civil war that followed after Alexander's death, Bactria was comparatively calm, and was little interfered with. In the reign of Antiochus Theos, the third prince of the Seleucid dynasty, Diodotus, governor of Bactria availing himself of the opportunity afforded by the perturbed state of affairs at the centre, revolted and declared his independence (250 B. C.).

Diodotus I (c. 250 to 240 B.C.).- Early in the reign of Antiochus, Diodotus was appointed governor of Bactria, and the neighbouring provinces of Sogdiana and Margiana. It was a critical time in the history of the country, as innumerable swarms of barbarians were hovering ominously all along its northern border, ready to break through the defences at the first opportunity and destroy every vestige of civilization. Diodotus was fully aware that the Seleucids were too busy with other affairs to pay their immediate attention to this corner of their empire. He also knew that an independent kingdom imbued with new life, and strong in its sense of national unity, would likely prove a better and more formidable barrier against these aggressions than the loosely attached extremity of an empire, lacking national vigour, and quite incapable to afford efficient protection at a critical juncture. These conditions led him to establish a strong national government in Bactria. But it appears that this change did not take place all at once. There seems to be a transitional period, which dragged on until the accession of the second prince of this line, who had the same name. It was during the reign of his son, Diodotus II, that Bactria declared its complete independence. It is not yet fully known whether Diodotus I assumed the title of king or not, but we are quite sure that his son called himself king, and struck coins in his own name.

It was under these circumstances that the foundation of a national government was laid at Bactria, which we call by the name of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom of Aryana, and which lasted for a period of some two hundred years. It was destined to play an important rôle in the civilization of Central Asia. But unfortunately this long period of two centuries and over presents considerable difficulties to the historians in view of the lack of available material. Our main sources of information for this long period are chiefly the coins struck by these Graeco-Bactrian kings. Fortunately these coins, some of which are very fine from artistic point of view, are found in very large numbers in various parts of the country, and record the names of no less than forty-five such rulers.

The birth of this new kingdom in the heart of Asia was an event of first rate political importance. Bactria, which on account of its natural wealth and strategical position, had held a notable part in the politics of Central Asia since the dawn of history, was once again to take a leading rôle. For a period of over a century it again served as a great bulwark against the inroads of the barbarian hordes of the north. By establishing peace in this part of Asia it stimulated its national trade and intercourse, and gave the neighbouring countries a chance to carry on lucrative trade with the west. It was also to develop a new culture, which may rightly be called Graeco-Afghan or Graeco-Bactrian.

Even at this remote age Bactria was highly cultivated and had a fine system of irrigation. It was considered to be the most fertile land in Central Asia. The classical writers all speak of the great fertility of this province and its network of irrigation canals, by which its Graecian rulers were enabled to extend their sovereignty over the adjacent countries. Nor was its prosperity due to its natural productiveness only. It seems to have been the chief seat of commerce between the East and the West. It formed an important link in the chain along which the Indian and Chinese goods were carried to Europe by way of the Caspian and Black Seas. It also stood on the road of the confluence of nations, and according to Avesta, it was in this part of the world that the human race made for the first time advance in civilization.

Heeren dwells repeatedly upon the natural and commercial advantages of this part of Aryana "It was destined by nature," he says, "to be the first place of exchange for the production of India, which it purchased with those of its own climate." In another passage he observes: "The city of Bactria must be regarded as the commercial entrepot of Asia". It was due to these considerations that Alexander the Great planted it thickly with Greek colonists.

Diodotus II. (c.240—227 B.C.).-

His first notable act seems to be the conclusion of an alliance with the newly-established kingdom of Parthia. The revolt of Parthia took place simultaneously, or a year or two later, with the revolt of Bactria. A certain Arsaces (or Ashk), perhaps native of Bactria, with the help of his brother, Tiridates (or Tirdad), succeeded in murdering the Seleucid governor Pherecles (Arthocles, or Andragoras, as he is variously called), and established an independent kingdom in Parthia which came to be known as the Parthian (Arsacid or Ashkaniyan) dynasty, and which was destined to last for some five centuries (until 226 A.D.).

Arsaces I did not live long to enjoy the fruits of his labour. He fell fighting, perhaps against the Bactrians, with whom his relations had been strained towards the close of his reign. His brother and successor, Tiridates (c.247 to 214 B.C.), knowing the political importance of his next door neighbour-Bactria-decided to conclude a close alliance with Diodotus II, so that he might be in a position to concentrate all his forces against Seleucus II (246-226 B.C.), then advancing eastward on a futile campaign of reconquest.

Meanwhile Diodotus II, availing himself of the opportunity, extended his influence west towards Herat, and in the north he succeeded marvelously in keeping the barbarian hordes at bay. His hands were too full to turn his attention to the south of the Hindu Kush, where Asoka the Great the third Mauryan emperor, was at the height of his power. We do not know exactly how long Diodotus II ruled. But it appears that he was the last king of the line, and that his dynasty came to an end with his death, probably in 230 B.C. or a little later (227 B.C.) at the hands of Euthydemus.

It is said that Diodotus I had two wives, one the mother of Diodotus II and the other a princess of the Seleucid family. From this Queen

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Diodotus had a daughter who was married to Euthydemus, governor of Sogdiana. A conspiracy was formed and Euthydemus with the help of his mother-in-law succeeded in killing Diodotus II, and ascended the throne in about 227 B.C.

EUTHYDEMUS-(c. 227-189B.C.).-The new king was a capable and energetic ruler. Some look upon him as the real founder of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom. These internal dissensions of the Bactrians gave a chance to the Seleucids to turn their attention to the east once more. About 212 B. C., Antiochus III appeared in the east at the head of a formidable force determined to reassert the Seleucid supremacy over the revolted kingdoms of Parthia and Bactria. He had little difficulty in over-running Parthia. Artabanes (or Arsaces III from 214 to 196 B. C.) was defeated and made to yield on terms dictated. Flushed with this victory, Antiochus now turned his attention towards Bactria (208 B. C.) Euthydemus, on learning the news, hastened to meet him on the western extremity of his kingdom. With a body of horse at his command he did his best to prevent Antiochus from crossing the Arius (Hari Rud). In the battle that followed on the banks of this river, Antiochus was wounded in his mouth, but in the night-attack the Bactrians, being out-numbered and out-manoeuvred, had to fall back on their capital Zariaspa (Bactria), which was strongly fortified and heroically defended. The siege lasted two years without either side gaining a decisive victory. The result being that both parties were exhausted and were anxious to have peace with honour. Euthydemus deputed Teleas, an officer of rank, to use his good offices in bringing about an honourable and amicable settlement. Antiochus was pointed out the perilous position of the east and the importance of Bactria as a formidable bulwark in the way of the barbarians, who were ready to swoop down on the civilized world at the first opportunity. If Bactria was wiped out or enfeebled, he was told, she would not be in a position to stem this tide then swarming on his borders, and the result would be that the whole of Central Asia, Persia, Mesopotamia and even Asia Minor, would be over-run by these ruthless marauders. Antiochus, too, who could do little during the last two years against the Bactrian, was anxious to have an honourable settlement of the question, so that he might be

in a position to return to his capital, where his presence was urgently needed. Therefore welcoming the offer, he showed his willingness for an amicable settlement. Consequently Demetrius, son of Euthydemus, a handsome youth of 18, was deputed as envoy to meet Antiochus in his camp. The youth made a favourable impression upon the king, who not only signed an agreement of friendship with the Bactrian Government, but cemented it with the marriage of his daughter with Demetrius.

By the terms of agreement arrived at, Antiochus waived his claim of suzerainty over Bactria, and allowed Euthydemus to retain the name and authority of king for himself. In return for these concessions, Euthydemus replenished the commissariat of the invading force, and surrendered some of his war-elephants to the Selucid king. Antiochus, after a few days' rest, left Bactria and directed his march towards the south of the Hindukush.

By this time Asoka the Great was dead. After his death (in 232 B. C.) the Mauryan dynasty had declined speedily. When Antiochus entered the valley of Kabul he found that it was held by a local prince, Sophagasenus by name, who was not in a position to offer an effective resistance to the invading force. Antiochus, passing through his territories, hurried back with all speed to his capital enroute Arachosia, Drangiana and Persia.

This gave Euthydemus a chance to turn his immediate attention to the south of the Hidiush, and to avail himself of the political situation there. The frontiers were consequently pushed southwards until they included the whole of the lower portion of Aryana. Some even think that towards the close of his reign he was able to annex a portion of the northern Panjab too. The real instrument of his conquests in these directions was the energetic crown-prince, Demetrius, who was made governor of the newly acquired districts.

In the east, too, Euthydemus efforts were crowned with great success and he was able to reduce Tukharistan (modern

Kataghan) and Badakhshan. He seems to have carried his arms in this direction into Chinese Turkestan. The Seres and Phryni tribes, who infested the highways, were punished and subjugated. Due to these measures, the trade routes were safer now, and trade with the adjacent countries and even Europe received a fresh-stimulus. The luxurious life of the Roman princes and nobles needed Chinese as well as Indian goods (silken fabrics from China, and fine muslins, pearls, jewels, spices and pepper from India) on a large scale. Nickel also found its way into Bactria at this time, where coins of this material for the first time were struck and circulated.

Euthydemus, not content with these successes, advanced west, and, entering Parthia, wrested two of its eastern provinces-Astauene and Apavartikene. Out of these he created two new provinces, which he called Tapuria and Tranxiana. He appointed Antimachus, his second son as governor of these newly-acquired districts. Antimachus made Merv his capital. Though acknowledging the suzerainty of Bactria, he had the right to issue coins in his own name.

Euthydemus was not only a great conqueror he was also a very efficient administrator and a very capable ruler. Under his sway Aryana reached a pitch of prosperity such as it had never before attained. Besides commerce, agriculture received a great impetus at this time by the digging of new canals. His reign must have been a long one, for the abundance of his coins bear testimony to the fact.

DEMETRIUS (c. 189-167 B. C.). Like his father he, too, was an energetic ruler. Even in his father's time he took a keen interest in the administration of the country and had a leading part in his campaign. He won most of his Indian laurels at this time. When he came to the throne he made his up his mind to follow in the footsteps of his father and execute his ambitious designs. Though successful at first, but this step ultimately proved his ruin.

Leaving Euthydemus the Younger, his son, as Regent in Bactria, Demetrius left for India at the head of a large army and accompanied by Appolodotus, his younger brother, and Menander, one of his ablest generals. He came first to Taxila, which he took without much difficulty. He is said to have built two other cities at this place, one at Bhir and the other at Sirkap. From this advance-base he marched into India, and within the short space of ten years, he not only over-ran the greater part of the Panjab, but was also in a position to annex Sindh and Kathiawar (Surashtra) to his vast empire. He appointed his brother, Appolodotus, as the governor of these newly conquered Indian provinces, with Ujjain as his capital. Meanwhile Menander, his general, proceeding east, was able to take Sagala (modern Sialkot). Thence marching along the Jumna and the Ganges, he reached Pataliputra (modern Patna), the seat of the Mauryan empire, which he took without much resistance.

Demetrius made the ancient city of Sagala, the capital of his Indian provinces, which he renamed Euthedemia, in honour of his deceased father. His empire now extended from Jaxartes to the Gulf of Cambay, and from Merv to the Ganges. The head of an elephant which appears in his coins as a head-dress is a symbol of his Indian conquests. These unprecedented victories on all sides led him to adopt the proud title of "Invictus" that is Invincible.

But to hold successfully such a mighty empire in those turbulent days was beyond the military capacity even of Demetrius himself.

On the contrary his very success in so many directions, which led to the dispersion of his forces, ultimately proved his undoing. The centre of his activities was now shifted from Bactria to India, and this gave a chance to his rivals to take advantage of his long absence in that direction. He was at Mathura (in India), when he heard that a conspiracy had been formed against him at Bactria, headed by Eucratides.

Eucratides was a leader of great vigour and ability. He was connected with the Seleucid family from his mother side. Under instructions from Antiochus Epaphanes he came out of Babylon in 169 B. C. at the head of a large army and made for Aryana. Passing through southern Persia, Seistan and Aeria, he entered Balkh at a time when Demetrius was busy with his Indian conquests. On receiving the news of this invasion, Demetrius immediately left for Bactria with all the forces at his disposal, instructing Menander at the same time to quit Pataliputra and hasten to his help with the force at his command. But by the time Demetrius could reach Bactria, Eucratides was able to win over most of the influential Bactrian chiefs to his side, who rallied to his standard with their followers. Details of this conflict are still wanting, but so much is clear that Demetrius finding that the game was lost, fell back. The country north of the Hindukush was permanently lost to him. We don't know how Demetrius passed the remaining days of his life, but so much is clear that he did not live long after the fall of Bactria.

Demetrius is also called the "King of the Indians" as he held sway over the whole of northern India, Lower Indus, Malwa, Gujarat, and probably Kashmir. He was the first to introduce a bilingual coinage by adding an Indian inscription in Kharoshti characters on the reverse to the Greek on the obverse.

EUCRATIDES (c. 157-147 B. C.). Eucratides, from the very beginning of his reign, was beset with numerous difficulties on all sides. On the north the Scythians had become bolder by these internecine wars; while in the west the Parthians were making preparations to pounce upon Aryana at the first available opportunity. Unfortunately these internal troubles and dissensions had practically drained Bactria of its life-blood, and she was not in a position to stem the surging waves which had completely encircled her. It is certain that the catastrophe could not have been averted, but no one can deny that it could have been postponed for a few more decades had Eucratides worked more cautiously.

Instead of consolidating his position in the north, the vulnerable part of his empire, he turned his attention towards the south of the

Hindukush, where the successors of Demetrius were in power. Leaving Helicoles, his son in Bactria, he crossed the Hindukush in 165 B.C., and took Capisa without much difficulty. Whence proceeding east he defeated and killed Appolodotus, who then held Gandhara. Not content with these victories, he penetrated into the Panjab, but here he sustained a crushing defeat at the hands of Menander, who had succeeded by this time in establishing a powerful kingdom in northern India.

Menander, who had left Pataliputra under instructions of his master, could not arrive in time to help Demetrius in his struggle against Eucratides. After the fall of Demetrius, he consolidated his position in northern India, and now when Eucratides advanced to meet him in the field, he was in position to inflict a crushing defeat on his opponent and to make him sue for peace at his terms. According to this treaty, Eucratides had to give up his claims over Taxila and Gandhara, and had to be content with Paropamisadae, Bactria and Sogdiana.

It was at such a critical juncture that Mithradates I of Parthia, flushed with the conquest of Media, invaded Bactria at the head of a large force. Eucratides, with his energies exhausted and his resources drained by constant wars south of the Hindukush, was not in position to stem the tide. Hurriedly collecting a force, he left for the north to meet the invaders. But his sudden death, at this time, probably caused by the machination of Heliocles, his son, enabled the Parthians to lay their hands on some of the north-western districts.

HELIOCLES (c. 147-130 B. C.). He is the last of the Graeco-Bactrian kings to rule over Bactria. Mithridates, after annexing some of the frontier districts, left Aryana to pursue his conquests in the west.

Heliocles, availing of this opportunity, rallied his father's forces, and was able to recapture some of the lost districts. But his good days were numbered, as he was unable to face two formidable foes on the north and west of his kingdom. Hemmed in by the Parthians on the west, and exposed to the constant invasions of the Scythians

from the north, he was at last forced to give up all his territories north of the Hindukush, and had to be content with his southern districts. Leaving Bactria in 135 B. C., he came to Capisa, where he succeeded in laying the foundation of a new kingdom, which was destined to last till the beginning of the first century A. D. In the south Heliocles was successful in annexing Gandhara and Taxila, and pushing the frontiers of his kingdom up to the river Jehlum.

CHAPTER 8.

The Sakas and Aryana

The Sakas (Scyths, Scythians, Sse, or Sais) were a branch of the Aryan race and first make their appearance in history in the 7th., century, B. C., when they assumed the offensive against the Medes and the Assyrians. The second time we hear of them is during the reign of Cyrus the Great. It is said that after the conquest of Bactria, Cyrus attacked the Sakas (Sacaë), whose country lay beyond Bactria. The Sakas were considered very good soldiers. They were formidable enemies on foot as well as on horseback. Ctesias says that their women went to the field in nearly equal numbers with their men, and that the mixed army which resisted Cyrus consisted of half a million, comprising both sexes, three hundred thousand men and two hundred thousand women. They were commanded by a king, Amorges by name, whose wife was called Sparethra. The king was taken prisoner in a battle with the Persians, whereupon his wife took command of the Scythian forces, defeated Cyrus, and took so many prisoners of rank that the Persian monarch gladly released Amorges in exchange for them. The third time a mention is made of them is during the reign of Alexander the Great, who crossing the Jaxartes in 328 B. C. inflicted a crushing defeat on the Scythians, but the revolt of Spitamenes in Sogdiana at this juncture compelled him to make a hasty retreat in that direction.

Their original home was the land beyond the Jaxartes (Sir Darya). They were held at bay for more than a century by the

early Graeco-Bactrian kings. But the mutual jealousies of these kings and their internal dissensions, combined with the interference of the Seleucids, gradually exhausted the resources of Bactria, making it an easy prey to these ruthless barbarians, who were powerful both on account of their vast numbers and a system of warfare not easy to withstand.

Herodotus and Hippocrates describe the Scythians "as coarse and rude in their habits, repulsive in appearance, and ferocious in temper; with large fleshy bodies, loose joints, soft swollen bellies, and scanty hair.

They never washed themselves, only cleansing their persons with a vapour bath; their women applying to their bodies a sort of paste, which made the skin glossy after it had been removed. They dwelt in wagons or in rude tents, consisting of woollen felts, arrayed around three bent sticks inclined towards each other. They subsisted mostly on mare's milk and cheese, adding at times some boiled beef or horseflesh as a delicacy. They drank the blood of their enemies fallen in the field of battle. They cut off the heads of their dead foes, and showed them to their chiefs, who gave them a share of the spoils, according to the numbers produced. They also stripped the scalps from the skulls of their fallen enemies, and suspended them on their bridle-reins as trophies. Occasionally they flayed the right arms and hands of their slain enemies, and used the skins as covers for their quivers. The upper part of the skulls were usually converted into drinking cups. They spent the greater part of the day on horse-back, attending to the vast herds of cattle and horses which constituted their chief wealth. They used the bow, their favourite weapon, while riding, shooting their arrows with unerring aim. They also carried a short sword or a battle-axe.

The Scythians were divided into many tribes, each having a hereditary chief. Several kings and chiefs ruled at the same time, but in great emergencies they elected one of them, who was vested with full supreme power.

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They worshipped the sun, the earth, the moon, air, water, and fire, and had a deity resumbling the Greek Herocles. But their chief object of adoration was a naked sword. On a specified day of each year solemn sacrifices of human beings and animals were offered and warm blood from the victims was poured upon the sword hung for the purpose. They had no priestly class.

The migration of these people was one of those great human upheavals, which have so often changed the current of history. The chief cause of this general migration is said to be the construction of the Great Wall of China extending from the Yellow Sea to the confines of Tibet. The Chinese emperors with a view to put a check to the constant inroads of the turbulent nomadic tribes living north of their country completed this wall in the second century B.C. The Hioang-nu, who are better known by the name of Huns, thus checked, were compelled to find occupation in other directions. They therefore attacked their neighbours, the Yueh-chi, who were living in the western corner of the Kan-su province. The Huns were able to defeat them and to drive them out of their grazing grounds (about 175 B.C.). Thus dislodged from their original home, the Yueh-Chi took to the west and soon came into conflict with other fierce tribes chief among these being the Wu-sun, inhabiting the valley of Illi, and the Sakas, living north of the Sir Darya (Jaxartes). These onward movements, attacks and defeats of the tribes ultimately resulted in a great commotion all along the north-eastern border of Aryana. The Sakas, who were unable to check the attacks launched by the Yueh-chi, crossed the Jaxartes into Sogdiana and occupied the land lying between that river and the Oxus. Shortly afterwards a second wave of the Yueh-chi pushed them forward, and the Sakas, crossing the Oxus, entered Bactria (Tahia of the Chinese writers). By this time the strength of the Bactrians had been greatly sapped by the constant domestic strifes, and consequently they were no match for the fierce warriors of the north. In the battles that ensued the flower of the Bactrian nobles fell fighting, while the remnant made for the remote and inaccessible parts of the Hindukush, where they succeeded in establishing independent petty principalities of their own.

A few years later a fresh wave of the Yueh-chi dislodged the Sakas from Bactria also, and they were forced to move west towards Aeria. Here they soon came into conflict with the Parthians. Phraates II (138-128), and Artabanus (128-124 B.C.), the Parthian kings one after the other fought desperately to stem this tide, but both of them were defeated and slain. Mithridates II, their successor, was more fortunate and defeated them more than once. Parthia now took the place of Bactria as a barrier to impede the westward movement of these nomadic tribes. The Sakas, thus finding themselves hemmed in on three sides, north, east and west, naturally forced their way to the south and came to Drangiana, which they renamed Sakastan, that is the land of the Sakas, from which Sajistan and modern Seistan have been derived.

After consolidating their position at Sakastan and Arachosia, they again set in motion, and by the way of Bolan Pass, entered the lower basin of the Indus, where they easily succeeded in establishing a powerful kingdom, called after them the Scythian or Indo-Scythian kingdom. Then proceeding along the Indus and its tributaries, the Sakas under their great leader Moa (or Maues) attacked the Yavana (Indo-Bactrian) kings of the northern Panjab. After taking Taxila (Takshacila) they advanced towards Gandhara which they took about 78 B.C. The Sakas thus succeeded in driving a wedge between the two reigning Greco-Bactrian houses--successors of Euthydemus and Eucratides--who after the loss of Bactria had been able to establish independent kingdoms south of the Hindukush.

Shortly after the reign of Maues, the house of the Euthydemus was extinguished, and the Yavana rule in the northern Panjab brought to an end, but the house of Eucratides, who were ruling in the upper valley of Kabul, (Capisa) lingered a little longer. The last king of this line was Hermaeus, who was finally driven out from his possessions (early in the first century A. D.) either by the Kushan king, Kajula Kadphises, or by Gondopernes, the Pahlava.

Maues was succeeded by Azes I, who destroyed the Yavana rule in the Eastern Panjab. It is believed by some scholars that there are two princes of the same name, who probably ruled one

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after the other. The second Azes was perhaps the son of Spalirises and the nephew of Vonones, whose reign ended in 19 A. D., and was succeeded by Gondophernes.

At the time when the Sakas were establishing their power in northern India, Vonones succeeded in founding a powerful kingdom south-west of Aryana, that is in Arachosia. He, too, like the Sakas' kings adopted the proud title of "Great King, or King of Kings".

Vonones, who began to reign about 30 B.C. ruled conjointly with his brother, Spalaphores, and with his nephew, Spalagadames, son of Spalahores. This family, which seems to be blended with that of the Parthians is called the house of Pahlavas, to distinguish it from the Parthians on one side, and from the Sakas on the other.

Gondophernes (19 to 45 A. D.), the son of Spalahores, succeeded Azes II as king of Arachosia in 19 A. D. He was an ambitious king, and was soon able to lay his hand on Taxila. This union of the two kingdoms (Taxila and Arachosia) seems to have been a peaceful one. After this achievement Gondophernes proceeded to annex the Kabul valley, probably from the Kushans, who seem to have already supplanted the Greeks in that region. But there appears to be little cohesion in the empire established by Gondophernes, for soon after his death in 45 A.D. it fell to pieces, each province asserting its independence. Western Panjab fell to the lot of Abdagases; Orthagames and Pacores took Arachosia and Sindh, while other parts of his dominions succeeded in establishing independent sovereign states. Pacores is supposed to be the last king of this line.

Gondopherens' name is associated, according to a widely-circulated legend, with that of St. Thomas, by whom he is said to have been converted to Christianity.

With the dismemberment of the Pahlava dynasty a way was opened to the Kushans, who not only retook their old possessions in the valley of Kabul, but pushing their conquests further towards east, occupied Gandhara and the Panjab.



Bamiyan: Wall Painting



Bamiyan : Buddhist Wall Painting.

But the Sakas' rule in India lingered a little longer. They had penetrated into that country as far as Ujjain. Inscriptions at Mathura and Nasik indicate that their power extended in the east as far as the Jumna, and in the south it reached the Godavari. The Sakas of Ujjain, according to Jaini legend, were expelled from that province by Vikramatya, who commemorated his triumph by the inauguration of a new era, Sakas' rule over Ujjain was re-established towards the beginning of the second century A. D., which lasted for three centuries.

Similarly the rule of the Yavana kings (Indo-Bactrian or Indo-Greek) rule lasted in India a little longer. Menander, as a general of Demetrius, had penetrated the Ganges valley as far as Pataliputra. But at this time he was summoned by his master to Aryana to help him in the serious rising that had taken place in Bactria between Demetrius and Eucratides. After the fall of his master he succeeded in establishing a powerful independent kingdom in northern India. His death took place between 150 and 145 B. C. Large numbers of his coins are found from various parts of India. It is said that he was an ardent follower of Buddhism.

After his death, his son, Agathocleia, being a minor, the Queen took the reins of government in her hand as the regent of her infant son. The reign of Strato, a member of this line, saw the decline of the Yavana rule in India, for a fresh wave of invasion from the north-west had commenced which ultimately proved its ruin.

CHAPTER 9.

The Mauryan Dynasty.

Alexander came to India in 326 B. C. His coming was no more than a raid, and it had very little effect on that country. Alexander, on his return, seems to have entrusted the control of Peshawar district to one of his generals named Pithon, son of Agenor. Ambhi was left in the country between the Indus and the Jehlum, with

Eudemus, a Thracian officer, who was given the command of the Greek colonies in that area. Porus was not only confirmed in the possession of his own territories, but was rewarded with the accession of new ones. His sphere of influence now extended all the way down the main streams of the Panjab to the Arabian Sea. But no sooner had Alexander turned his back on India than he learned that a mutiny had broken out in his Indian satrapies, and as a result of that Philippos, one of his satraps, was assassinated. Shortly afterwards Eudemus came into conflict with the Indian princes. In 317 B. C. he treacherously killed Porus and seized his war-elephants. Then leaving India he marched westward to take part in the civil war that had broken out after Alexander's death. Pithon, too, left his satrapy to join the fray. Both of these generals fell fighting. Similarly Ambhi, the Raja of Taxila, disappears from the stage. These hasty changes in the administration of the country led to a great rebellion in which India was, at last, able to cast off the foreign yoke and establish a strong national government of its own.

By the time that Seleucus Nicator, one of the ablest generals of Alexander, was able to restore order and turn his attention to the east of the dominions that had fallen to his lot, a new ruler had arisen in India. This was Chandragupta Maurya (Sadrakutta of the Greeks). In 326 B. C. when Alexander invaded India, Chandragupta went north to meet him at Taxila. With him was a very able Brahman named Vishnugupta, popularly known Chanakya or Kautilya. Both had great ambitious schemes in their heads. It so appears that Chandragupta being dazzled and attracted by the glory of Alexander the Great wanted to follow his example as soon as he had left the Indian soil. In Chanakya he had an ideal friend and a very wise counsellor for this purpose. They both kept their eyes open and watched carefully what was then happening in India. No sooner had he left India than they came forward to execute their plans. First of all putting himself at the head of a national rising, Chandragupta attacked and drove the Greek garrison that Alexander had left behind in the Indian territories. After taking possession of Taxila in 317. B.C. he marched south to Pataliputra, where he defeated and dethroned the Nanda king. He thus became the master of the whole of northern India, from the Indus to the Ganges.

The dynasty which he founded is known by the name of Mauryan. It lasted for a period of 137 years (315 to 178 B.C.). His empire was the largest hitherto known in India, as it embraced the whole territory between the Himalayas and the Vindhya, and from the mouths of the Ganges to the Indus, including Gujarat.

It is a pity that we do not know much about the early life of Chandragupta. He is said to have been a man of low birth, perhaps a menial of Nanda house. His dynasty is called Maurya after the name of his mother, Mura. Others say that his mother's father was the keeper of the king's peacock, and the Sanskrit word for peacock is Maurya, whence comes the word Mauryan. Early in life he came into contact with Chanakya, a Brahmin of Taxila, who was well-versed in arts of peace and war. Henceforward he was Chandragupta's most trusted adviser and sincere friend. It is said that Chanakya brought about the downfall of the Nanda dynasty without having recourse to arms. Chandragupta then made Pataliputra his capital.

Within a short time he was able to carry his victorious arms through the length and breadth of the country. These extraordinary achievements were, undoubtedly, due more to the statesmanship of his capable minister than to his own military genius. As soon as the task of conquest was over, Chandragupta with the help of his minister, set himself to the work of consolidating his vast empire. How far he succeeded in this was seen when his territories were invaded by Seleucus Nicator, who wanted to repeat the exploits of his master, Alexander the Great. The invader soon realised his mistake in estimating the strength of his opponent. He found himself face to face with a powerful and organised force led by an able and energetic king in person. He was forced to conclude a hasty alliance and march back to Syria where his presence was urgently needed. By the terms of the treaty signed, the Syrian king ceded to Chandragupta the whole tract of land lying south of the Hindukush, and he is also said to have married his daughter to the Indian prince. In return for these concessions he got only 500 fighting elephants.

Seleucus sent a Greek ambassador, Megasthenes, to represent him at the Mauryan court. The Ambassador lived at Pataliputra.

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for a considerable time, and has left behind a very interesting account of India of those days. Unfortunately, his valuable work entitled,

"Ta Indica,, is lost, but a few fragments of it are Preserved to us in the accounts of other Greek writers, which present us with a vivid picture of India and its people at this early stage. This is the earliest authentic record of India by a foreigner who knew the country himself. Megasthenes furnishes us with particulars about the strength of Chandragupta's army and the administration of the State. He mentions forest ascetics, whom he calls Hylobioi, and distinguishes Bramanes and Sarmanai as two classes of Indian priests and philosophers, meaning perhaps the Brahmins and the Buddhists. He also tells us that the Indians worshipped the rain-bringing Zeus, whom they called Indra, as well as the river Ganges.

Chanakya is said to have compiled for the guidance of his royal disciple a comprehensive book on political science, called Artha-shastra, which also furnishes us many useful information on the social, economic, and political life of ancient India.

Hitherto learning was confined to the one class of Indians, that is Brahmins, and to the Sanskrit language as its medium, but Chandragupta, probably with the help of his able minister, cultivated the spoken language Pali, a dialect of Sanskrit, and thus threw open the acquisition of knowledge to all classes of his people. Chandragupta died in about 297 B.C., after a reign of 18 years, and was succeeded by his son, Bindusara.

Bindusara (297-272 B.C.). Chandragupta was succeeded by his son Mitra-Gupta or Bindusara as he is popularly known. Like his father, he, too, was a Hindu by religion. He renewed the treaties of friendship with the Seleucids, and maintained the honour and prestige of his empire till his death. The only important event of his reign was the rebellion of Taxila, which, however, was easily crushed.

ASOKA (272-232 B.C.).- Asoka, whose real name is Piyadasi, succeeded to the throne of Maurya in 272 B.C. after the death of his father, Bindusara. The Mauryan Empire at this time included

the whole of south-eastern Afghanistan, northern and central India, and in the south it extended to the very heart of the Deccan. Not content with this vast empire, Asoka in 261 B.C. started the conquest of Kalinga, an ancient and powerful kingdom on the south-east coast of India, between the Mahanadi, Godavari and Kistna rivers. The people of Kalinga put up a heroic resistance, defending every inch of their motherland, but being outnumbered they were in the end subdued after terrible slaughter. It is said that more than one hundred thousand of them fell fighting, while a greater number were taken prisoners. The horror and brutality of this scene of battle filled Asoka with a sense of deep remorse, and awakened in him a genuine compassion for the sufferers and an abhorrence of war. He took a solemn oath that he would have no war in future, and it is to his credit, that he kept his promise faithfully to the end of his long reign. For the rest of his life he devoted the vast resources of his Empire for the general welfare of his people and the betterment of his country. Thus the Kalinga war was the turning point in Asoka's career, who shortly after that adopted Buddhism and took steps in the propagation of that religion. It is said that he abolished capital punishment throughout his vast empire. His compassion for protecting life was not limited to human beings, but extended to animals as well. Hospitals, especially meant for them, were erected in different parts of the country, and animal sacrifice was strictly forbidden.

Asoka is noted for his rock and pillar edicts, which are scattered all over India and in some parts of Eastern Aryana as well, which tell us of his principles of government and of his ethical system. In these edicts, over 30 in number, we still have his message to his people and to posterity.

He is credited to have lent active support to the propagation of Buddhism (1) and spread of education. Four universities

(1) Buddhism. The founder of the faith Prince Gautama (Siddarta or Sakayamani) was the son of Suddodana, a petty chief in the submountane Tarai of the Himalayas on the borders of Nepal. The scholars have assigned to his birth the year 557 B. C., and he is said to have lived till the advanced age of eighty. (†)

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Takshacila in the north, Mathura and Ujjain in Central India, and Nalanda near Patna, attracted students not only from all parts of his dominions, but from foreign countries as well.

Asoka convened the Third Buddhist Council at Pataliputra, which deliberated for nine months to settle the disputed points about Buddhist doctrines. Shortly after this he sent religious missions to various countries, such as Tibet, Burmah, Cambodia, Siam, Ceylon, Sin-kiang, and even to distant kingdoms of Egypt, Syria, Macedonia and Albania. It was under his patronage that Buddhism for the first time found its way into Aryana and made rapid progress in the various parts of the country. It was one of the important religions of Aryana till the advent of Islam.

Majjhantika, Dhanimarakhita, and Maharakhita formed the group of missionaries sent to Afghanistan and other countries of the west. Thus we see that in the first half of the third century B. C., Buddhism entered Gandhara, and the entire Kabul valley became the "New Magadhah"—Buddhism's new land of promise. According to M. Foucher, a member of the French Archaeological Mission to Afghanistan, Buddhism spread from Nagarahara (present Jalalabad) to Lampaka (now Laghman), and from there it found its way to Tagab and Nijrab, and then to Kabul and Capisa. A few years later, through Ghorband, Fundiqistan and Bamian, it reached Haibak, Bactria and Tukharistan. As a result of this new religious movement Mazdism (a corrupt form of Zoroastrianism) gave way

(†) In the beginning of his life Gautama was steeped in all sorts of human pleasure, but later on the sight of the miseries of life wrought a complete change in him, and Gautama at the early age of twenty-nine renounced the world. The very universe appeared to him as a maze. All things were passing away; nothing appeared permanent or stable. Only the truth; only the absolute eternal law of things seemed immutable. "Let me see that," he said to himself, "and I can give lasting peace to mankind. Then shall I become their deliverer." Thus against the strong entreaties of his father, wife and friends, Gautama made up his mind to leave the palace and all its comforts and seek the truth. (††)

gradually to Buddhism in the eastern half of the country. A fire altar at Balkh, built by Spindat, son of Vishtasp, was turned into a Buddhist Sangharama and renamed Navavihara, the Nobahar of the early Muslim writers.

This state of affairs continued till the middle of the 7th century A. D. At the time when Huien Tsang visited Balkh, it was still a great Buddhist centre, and was known as Rajagriha, that is the Little Royal City, and the temple of Nava-vihara was in full bloom. Parajanakara, the distinguished priest of this religious institution, received the Chinese Master of Law.

Asoka sent his son Mahendra, to Ceylon with a mission to introduce Buddhism into that island. He was soon followed by his sister, Sanghamitta, who took with her a group of nuns to that country.

Asoka is said to have erected great monasteries--Vihara as it called, and several thousands of stupas, enshrining the relics of the Buddha in various corners of his wide-flung empire. He maintained friendly intercourse with the Graeco-Bactrian and Syrian monarchs, and even with Egypt. He introduced many of the useful

(††) One night mounting his horse he rode off into a jungle. During his sojourns he met many Brahmanical priests and teachers, and had talks and discussions with them, but nothing could satisfy his acute intelligence. Leaving their society he came to the village of Uruvela near Gaya. It is said that it was here that after protracted meditations he attained enlightenment, and became to be known the Buddha, or the Enlightened One. Then he came to Benares and there in the well-known Deer Park (Marigdava) he began to preach his new faith--that is Buddhism. The Eight-fold Path, which, in his opinion, gives insight, and leads to wisdom, calmness, knowledge, enlightenment, and ultimately to Nirwan (the Abode of Peace) is:

(1) Right View, (2) Right Aspirations, (3) Right Speech, (4) Right Conduct, (5) Right Living, (6) Right Efforts, (7) Right Mindfulness, and (8) Right Meditations. (†††)

arts of these countries into his own. To him can be traced the commencement of architecture and sculpture in India, as applied to religious and other public edifices, which had been introduced from Bactria. It has been ascertained beyond doubt that before his reign architecture was not applied to public buildings, as temples and the like; in fact none existed. It may be assumed that even up to Asoka's period, the most populous cities in India consisted of little better than clay and wooden dwellings. But in his reign for the first time stone was substituted for wood.

The extent of Asoka's empire can very well be gauged from one of his Rock-Edicts (No. 13). It included South-Eastern Afghanistan, Nepal, the whole of India, except the southern extremity of the Peninsula.

On Asoka's death in 232 B. C., the Empire, founded by his grandfather Chandragupta, declined rapidly. The provinces fell off one by one. Taxila and other outlying provinces were able once more to assert their independence. This gave a chance to the Graeco-Bactrian kings to turn their attention in that direction. The first of these kings to reach Taxila was Demetrius.

The rule of these Graeco-Bactrian kings at Taxila lasted for more than a century. It was finally swept away by the invading hordes of the Sakas in the first century A. D. From their base in Seistan and Arachosia, these Sakas had crossed the Indus under their chief Maues to the conquest of Sindh and the Panjab.

The Mauryan Empire came to an end in about 185 B. C., when General Pushtyamitra Sunga, having treacherously slain his master, Brihadratta, the last king of the line, usurped the throne, and founded the Sunga Dynasty, which lasted till 73 B. C.

(†††) The Buddha believes that all existence is an evil, and that release from this state of change and decay could only be attained through knowledge, by which he meant the sight of everlasting truth, the power of perceiving the immutable laws of the universe. This knowledge could only be attained by moral teaching, by purity of heart and soul.

CHAPTER 10.

The Parthians.

Parthia was a small hilly country comprising the north-western corner of Aryana. It was bounded on the north by Margiana, on the east by Aeria, on the south by Sarangiana (modern Seistan), and on the west by Hyrcania and Sogatia. Its greatest length from east to west was 230 miles, with a breadth of nearly 200 miles from north to south.

Four or five distinct ranges of mountains here run roughly parallel to one another. The elevation of these mountains is not very great; the highest peaks rise to 7,000 feet only. They are for the most part barren and rugged, and very scantily supplied with timber, but their lower skirts in many places are capable of furnishing good pasturage for flocks and herds. The valleys, on the other hand, are rich and fertile in the extreme. Compared with the arid and inhospitable deserts, which adjoin it upon the north and the south, Parthia was looked upon as a terrestrial paradise.

Its winters, though protracted, are not very harsh; the thermometer seldom sinking below ten or eleven degrees of Fahrenheit during the nights, and during the day-time rising (even in December and January) to 40 or 50 degrees. During cold weather storms of sleet and hail are very common, while in summer the heat is quite considerable.

The situation and character of Parthia, thus on the whole, favoured her becoming an imperial power. She had abundant resources, and a territory apt for the production of a hardy race. But for centuries Parthia lived in obscurity. The name is not mentioned either in the Old Testament Scriptures or in the Zend-Avesta. The Assyrian inscriptions are also silent on this point. It is not until the reign of Darius Hystaspes that we have any historical evidence of the existence of the Parthians in that country. It is said that in 521 B.C. Parthia revolted, and Hystaspes, father of Darius, who was the governor of the province, was able to crush the rebellion.

We do not know exactly who the Parthians were. On the ethnology of this nation historians differ a lot, and it is only after they emerged from obscurity and became a great people, that the classical writers take the trouble of investigating this point. Some say that they are a branch of the Scythians, who at a remote period had migrated to this land, and gradually made themselves master of the region. Others add to this that the Scythic tribes to which they belonged were called Dahae; that their own proper name was ¹Parin, or Aparni. While others contend that they were a branch of the Bactrian-Aryans, and derive their names from the Packast (packtyus and moedrn pash-tun). Unfortunately the remains of the parthian language, which we possess, beyond their names, are too scanty and too little to furnish a clue in settling this vexed question of their ethnic character.

The Parthians probably maintained their independence from the time of their settlement in the district called after their name until the sudden arrival in the country of the great Persian conqueror. Cyrus, who had, it is probable, little difficulty in obtaining their submission. Except on a single occasion to which reference has already been made, they did not make a serious attempt to shake off the alien yoke.

In the final struggle of Persia against Alexander the Great, the parthians fought on the Persian side at Arbela.

The struggle for power which broke out almost immediately after Alexander's death among his generals, may be regarded as having been brought to a close by the battle of Ipsus 301 B.C. His vast empire was divided into four parts. Of the four powers thus established, the most important, and the one with which we are here specially concerned, was that of the Seleucids, founded by Seleucus Nicator, one of Alexander's generals, who was recognised as monarch of all the Greek conquests in the East. It was in the reign of his grandson, Antiochus Theos that the standard of revolt was raised successfully by Diodotus in Bactria. The example set by Bactria was followed soon in the neighbouring country of parthia. We do not know exactly how this revolt took place. According to one account the leader

of the revolt. Arsaces, was a Bactrian, to whom the success of Diodotus was not agreeable, and who therefore, leaving Bactria with his brother Tiridates came to Parthia, where he induced the people to take up arms against the Seleucids. Another version says that the real cause of revolt was the gross insult offered by Andragoras (or phercles) the Seleucid satrap to one of the brothers.

Where upon the Parthians under their chiefs, Arsaces and Tiridates, rose against the governor, and had him killed. Arsaces then seized the supreme power. He, however, lived but for a short time. Within less than two years after coming to power he was killed in a battle by a spear-thrust in his side, and was succeeded by his brother Tiridates in c. 247 B. C.

Tiridates, the successor of Arsaces I, is known in history as Arsaces II. This custom was later on followed by all the kings of this dynasty bearing the name of Arsaces in addition to their real appellation. If the Parthian kingdom owed its origin to Arsaces I, it was indebted for its consolidation and settled government to Arsaces II. He had the good fortune to reign for about 33 years (from c. 247 to 214 B. C.). During this time he enlarged its boundaries on all sides, and strengthened its defences. Not feeling himself altogether strong enough to face the Seleucids single-handed, he prudently entered into an alliance with Diodotus, king of Bactria. Having secured his friendship and moral support he then marched boldly against Callinicus, the Syrian monarch, who had sought to reclaim the lost territories. In the battles that followed the Seleucids were defeated with great loss.

Tiridates, during the rest of his life, was busy strengthening and adorning his kingdom. He built a city in the vicinity of modern Meshad, to which he gave the name of Dara and made it the seat of his government. After his death, however, successors preferred to keep Hecatompylos, as before, the headquarters of their government.

After Tiridates' death, his son Artabanus I, ascended the Parthian throne (c 214 B. C.), who taking advantage of the war

then raging between Antiochus III the second son of Sileucus Callinicus and Achaëus, one of the rebel satraps, advanced into Media and took Ecabatana, and added to his dominions the entire tract of land lying between Hyrcania and the Zagros mountains.

Antiochus, advancing suddenly against him, was able to disperse the Parthian forces. Pressing forward he occupied Hecatompylos, the chief city. Up to this point the Parthian king had declined to offer any serious resistance. He had withdrawn his main forces towards Hyrcania and was waiting for his opportunity. Antiochus, after giving his army a few days' rest at the Parthian capital, set out in pursuit of the enemy. At this time Artabanus displayed great valour, but was at last compelled to submit a peace was concluded by which the Parthian monarch promised to lend assistance in the expedition which the latter was about to conduct against Bactria.

Bactria, however, maintained her ground with courage, and after a siege of two years, Antiochus was compelled to recognize the complete independence of Bactria. Thus we see that the Bactrian monarchy came out of the contest quite unscathed, and the terms of peace constituted almost a proof that the Syrian yoke would never be re-imposed on the Bactrian nation.

Soon after the departure of the Antiochus, Euthydemus, the Bactrian king, launched his expeditions to the south of the Hindukush. With the help of his energetic son, Demetrius, he was able to occupy the whole of Eastern Aryana. He did not stop there. Demetrius crossed the Indus into the Panjab, and the city of Euthydemia, on the Hydaspes, was perhaps the limit of the empire in that direction. The coins of Euthydemus, which are found over a wide area, show that he was the master of the following provinces:

Sogdiana, Bactria, Margiana, Aeria, Paropamisadae, Drangiana, Gandhara and Arachosia. The Power and successes of the Bactrian arms at this time account sufficiently that the contemporary Parthian monarchs stood upon their guard and made no attempt

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to pick up a quarrel with such a formidable neighbour. On the contrary Euthydemus, availing himself of the opportunity, led an expedition into Parthia, and was able to annex two of her eastern provinces, namely Tapuria and Tranxiana, to his empire.

Mithridates I, who came to power in about 174 B.C. was one of the great kings. His reign which lasted till c. 136 B.C., is the most important period in Parthian history. Receiving from his brother, Phraates a small kingdom, confined between the city of Charax on one side, and the river Arius (or the Hari Rud) on other, he transformed it within thirty-eight years of his reign into a great and flourishing empire.

Meanwhile the Bactrian monarchs, who in their ambitious designs had been able to extend the limits of their empire to the Gulf of Cambay and the river Ganges, overstrained the strength of their State, and by shifting the centre of their power from Bactria to India, had injured irretrievably its northern defences. Besides, internal troubles had practically drained Bactria of its life-blood. Eucratides, who had succeeded Demetrius, was like his predecessors, anxious to devote his attention to the south. While he carried on successful wars against the Arachosians, the Drangians, and the Indians, his hold on the northern districts was greatly relaxed. Incursions of the Scythians from the steppes beyond the Jaxartes carried fire and sword over the greater part of his northern provinces.

Such was the political condition of Bactria when it was attacked by Mithridates. Eucratides, with his energies wasted and his resources exhausted by constant wars south of the Hindukush, hurried to meet the Parthian king. His sudden death, however, at this juncture, perhaps by the machination of his son Heliocles, the governor of Bactria, enabled the Parthians to annex some of the frontier districts.

It is conjectured that Heliocles took this step against his father because he regarded with disapproval his tame submission to Parthia on a previous occasion when he allowed Parthia to take possession of Tapuria and Tranxiana. He desired the recovery of these provinces which Eucratides had been content to cede for the sake of peace. He justified his crime on the ground that his father was a public enemy.

Heliocles accession to the throne was a challenge to the parthian king who now redoubled his efforts, and marched with all speed against the Bactrian king. Elated by his initial success in the north he is said to have attacked and annexed Arachosia and Drangiana to his empire, and penetrated as far as the Hydaspes. But it so appears that he did not effect permanent conquest of these Indian provinces.

Heliocles held his own for some time in the north, but a fresh wave of the Scythians forced him to retreat towards the south of the Hindu-kush. He is the last of the Graeco-Bactrian kings to rule over Bactria.

Mithridates died after a glorious reign of 38 years. He was succeeded by his son, Phraates II, who, like his father, entertained the design of invading Syria. While he was thus busy with his Syrian wars, the Scythians invaded parthia from the rear. The parthian army hurried to meet them, but they were routed with great losses, Phraates himself being among the slain.

He was succeeded by his uncle, Artabanus, a man of great energy. But the situation of Bactria at this time was very critical. Fresh hordes of the Scythians were pouring into the country, hotly pursued by the Yuehchi. The Bactrians had to pay a heavier toll. Province after province of their kingdom was swallowed up by these barbarous hordes. Pressed on continually by the newly arrived tribes such as Massagtae, the Tukhari, the Asii (or Asiani) and Sakaruli, the old inhabitants of Transoxiana were thrown out of their conquests and were compelled to seek new settlements further west in Aeria and Parthia. They in their turn threatened to carry all before them. Artabanus II, thinking that the best method to check their advance lay in aggression, invaded them at the head of a large force. In the thick of an engagement, Artabanus was wounded in his arm, from the effect of which he died almost immediately.

The parthians, losing their monarch, were disheartened, and fell back precipitately.

On the death of Artabanus II (c 124 B.C.), his son, Mithridates II was proclaimed king. He was entirely successful where his father

and cousin had signally failed. He gained a number of victories over the Scythians, and effectually checked their advance towards parthia, thus forcing the flood of invasion to take a southerly direction towards Drangiana, Arachosia and the Sindh basin. Henceforth danger to parthia at the hands of the Scythians passed away, and the invaders found a vent for their excess population in another direction.

Victories in the east encouraged Mithridates to turn his attention in the opposite direction towards Armenia. Hitherto no occasion had arisen for any direct dealings between Rome and Parthia. Their respective spheres of influence were separated by hundreds of miles. But the progress of the two empires in the opposite directions was gradually bringing them nearer to each other.

Mithridates II died probably in 89 B.C. after a reign of 35 years. He was one of the most vigorous and successful of the Parthian monarchs. It is to his credit that he saw the advantage of establishing diplomatic relations with Rome. Sulla a Roman general from his base in Cilicia, swept unopposed through Cappadocia to the banks of the Euphrates, where he was met by Orobazus, a Parthian ambassador, with proposal for a defensive and offensive alliance with Rome. Sulla, this however was not authorized to conclude such an alliance. Shortly after the interests of these two imperial powers approaching from the opposite directions clashed and they took up arms against each other (55 B.C.). These wars, between Rome and parthia, dragged on for more than two centuries and a half. The long roll of campaigns thus begun between these two powers came to a close with a signal victory for the parthians in 217 A. D. But Parthia was not destined to enjoy the fruit of this victory for long, for the dynasty was overthrown by Ardsher Babakan, (I) the vassal king of Fars, some nine years later (in 226 A. D.)

The parthians inherited the culture and refinement of both Greece and persia. On their coins the Partian kings repeat the Greek royal title "Great King", or the style of "Great King of Kings" a title which is distinctly persian. Greek was also used as the official language of the parthians.

(1) Ardsher Babakan after overthrowing the parthian monarch Ardawan (or Artaban) in 226 A.D. founded the Sassanian Dynasty, which lasted for over four centuries, until it was overthrown by the Arabs in the middle of the VIIth century A.D.

CHAPTER II

The Kushans.

The Kushans were a branch of a great nomadic race called Yueh-chi by the Chinese writers. Their original home was Kan-su, extreme north-west corner of China. They were defeated and driven out from that region in about 175 B. C. by Hioang-nu (on the Huns), another powerful tribe. Proceeding westward the Yueh-chi soon came into conflict with the Wu-sun, inhabiting the country of the Illi and Tarim rivers, now known by the name of Kulja. The Wu-sun were routed and their king was slain in the action. The Yueh-chi, however, did not stay there, but continuing their journey westward, they came into contact with another powerful people called the Scythians, who were occupying the land on the right bank of the Jaxartes. The Scythians in their turn were routed and pushed southwards towards the Oxus basin. Thus a general condition of unrest and commotion took place among all the nomadic tribes living on the north-western fringe of China and in Central Asia. Wave followed wave in quick succession, and on they came towards Aryana itself. The Yueh-chi in their turn were defeated and dislodged of their newly-acquired possessions by the revival of the Wu-sun tribe, who had now the active support of the Huns as well. Crossing the Jaxartes the Yueh-chi entered Sogdiana, that is the land between the Jaxartes and the Oxus, while the Scythians driven onwards had to seek new homes south of the Oxus. Such was the political condition of Central Asia, when Won-tu, the Chinese emperor, sent Tehang-kieu, as his envoy to the Yueh-chi, requesting them to help China in her struggle against the Huns (c. 138 B.C.). He is perhaps the first Chinese writer to leave useful information about Central Asia. According to him Tahia, that is the country south of the Oxus, was then a flourishing centre of trade, and its capital was Lan-shi.



Kabul Museum : Koushan Couple



Hadda : Solder, 3 - 5 th century

A little later the Yuch-chi were again driven out from their trans-Oxus territories by a fresh wave of the Wu-sun. Crossing the Oxus, they now entered Bactria forcing the Scythians to move west towards Aeria and Parthia. Here in Bactria the Yueh-chi came into contact with a highly civilized and cultured people, who lived mostly by trade and crafts. The rough conquerors gradually gave up their nomadic habits and adopted a sedentary mode of life. Mingling with the Bactrians, they soon learnt their art and trade. The prominent tribes of the Yuch-chi that took part in these early incursions are known by the names of Asioli, the Pasionoi, the Tukharo and the Sakaruli. Driving out the Scythians from that quarter (between 140-130 B.C.), they occupied the whole of Northern Afghanistan and divided it into five independent principalities, namely, Hiu-mi, Kuen-shauang, Shauang-mi, Hitu and Kaofu.

A century later the chief of the Kushans, one of these tribes, gained supremacy over all the other clans, and succeeded in founding a united and powerful kingdom in Bactria, known by the name of his own tribe. Thus Bactria became once more the nerve centre of a power that was destined to play an important rôle in the history of Aryana and the adjacent countries for many centuries to come. In the west the Kushans measured sword successfully with the Parthians, in the east they waged wars with China, while in the south they over-ran the whole of Northern India as far as Mathura, Malwa and Pataliputra. Their power in Aryana with the exception of an interval of about a century and a half, lasted till the middle of the ninth century A.D. This long period of nearly eight hundred years may roughly be divided into following periods:

- 1) The Golden Period of the Kushan rule, lasting from A.D. 40 to the beginning of the third century A.D.
- 2) The Break-up of the Kushan Empire or the Period of Petty Kushan Kings, lingering for another two centuries (c. 220-425 A.D.).
- 3) The Supremacy of the Ephthalites (c. 425 to 553. A.D.).
- 4) The Invasion of the Toukieu Turks (c. 553-649 A.D.).
- 5) The Kushano-Ephthalite Dynasties (from 7th Century A.D. to the middle of the ninth century.).

The Kushans, like their predecessors, the Graeco-Bactrians, speedily gaining power became the masters of not only the whole of Aryana but succeeded in establishing a vast and powerful empire. According to Chinese sources their first king was Kieu-Tsiu-Kiu, who had been identified with Kajula Kadphises (or Kozola Kadaphes). After uniting the tribes and consolidating his position in the north, he crossing the Hindukush, entered Eastern Afghanistan about the middle of first century of the Christian era, and succeeded in taking Kipin (Capisa), Kao-fu (Kabul), and Pouta (the country round Ghazni and Gerdéz). Some even look upon him as the conqueror of Takshacila (Taxila) too, but the Chinese writers think that it was not Kajula Kadphises but his son and successors, Vima Kadphises, who extended the dominions of the Kushan empire from the Kabul valley to Taxila.

Kajula Kadphises in his coins which are struck mostly in the Kabul valley calls himself Maharajasa, that is the king of kings; or after the fashion of the Chinese emperors, he styles himself Dera-putra, that is the son of god or heaven. He died at the advanced age of eighty in or about 78 A. D., and was succeeded by his son, Vima Kadphises (or Kadphises II.)

Vima Kadphises (c.78 to 110 A. D.) .- He, too, like his father was a great conqueror, and enlarged the empire which his predecessor had left him in legacy. He subjugated the whole of northern India as far as Benares in the east and the mouth of the Indus in the west. Some are even of the opinion that his power extended southwards as far as the Narbada.

Towards the close of the first century A.D., China had become extremely powerful and was fastly extending her empire towards the west. This step soon brought her in clash with Aryana. A great Chinese general, Pan-chao by name, led his army from victory to victory till it reached the shores of the Caspian Sea. Kadphises II was naturally alarmed by these military achievements of China in his close vicinity. He challenged the Chinese power by demanding the hand of a Chinese princess in marriage (about 90 A.D.). The refusal of the Chinese

emperor led to hostilities between China and Aryana. Kadphises despatched a formidable force, about 700,000 horse, to the Chinese frontier of Sinkiang under one of his generals, Si by name. But the long and tedious journey over a difficult and inhospitable country, such as the Pamirs-told heavily on the general health of the soldiers who, after sustaining, a crushing defeat, retired precipitately. As a result of this defeat Kadphises was compelled to pay annual tribute to the Emperor of China.

Not disappointed by his defeat, Kadphises tried to open new avenues for his people. He established commercial relations with India and the Roman Empire. As a result of royal encouragement Roman gold began to pour in to his vast dominions at a rate that Kadphises was in position to issue gold coinage in large numbers.

He, too, calls himself Maharajasa and Devaputra. The figure of Shiva and the sacred cow Nandi on the back of his coins, and the title of Maheshivara are evidences to show that he was inclined to Shivaism. Kadphises' reign saw the decline of the Graeco-Bactrian art and the beginning of a new school of sculpture known by the name of Gandhara (or Graeco-Buddhist) School. The Kharoshti and the Greek alphabets were in vogue in his time, and both characters appear on his coins.

Soter Megas. The history of the next ten to fifteen years is by no means very clear to us, and there seems to have been a break between the reign of Kadphises II and his illustrious successors, Kanishka the Great. To about this period belongs the coins of the nameless ruler, who is content to call himself Soter Megas, that is the great saviour.

He has been identified by some writer with Vima Kadphises, while others contend that he was the military commander appointed by Kadphises the second to rule over his Indian Empire.

Kanishka the Great (c.120 to 160 A.D.). Kanishka, the third king of this line, was the most famous of all the Kushan kings. Under him the Kushan power attained its zenith. In the east he carried his successful *arms* over a greater part of the Chinese Turkestan, while in the south he over-ran the whole of northern India as far as the Jumna and the Ganges or (Ghazipur) the Chambal and the Vindhya.

Kanishka was not the son of Kadphises II. It seems probable that he belonged to another tribe, the Little Yueh-chi as it is called, that came from Khotan (Chinese Turkestan). It so appears that after the death of Kadphises II, some of his Indian provinces asserted their independence, and when Kanishka ascended the throne, he was obliged to conquer them once more. He first took Kashmir, where he laid the foundation of a new city called after him, Kanishkapura. He then extended his authority over the whole of northern India, from Ghazipur in the east to the Vindhya Hills in the south.

But most of his time was spent in waging successful wars against China and the wild tribes of Central Asia. He subdued the chiefs of Khotan, Yarkand and Kashghar. To the west he extended his dominions at the cost of the Parthians. After a glorious reign of over forty years, Kanishka was at last murdered by his own officers (probably in 160 A.D.), who were tired of his long and arduous wars on all sides.

Kanishka had two capitals; one Purushapura (Peshawar), where he spent his winters, the other at Capisa (Bagram) which was his summer resort. Besides, he spent his early spring and late autumn in the happy valleys of Nangrahar (modern Jalalabad).

It so appears that Kanishka had at first leanings towards zoroastrianism, but at the same time worshipped some Hindu deities as well.

Later on he embraced Buddhism, and like Asoka became an active and liberal Patron of that faith. In peshawar Museum a casket

with a portrait of this king is still preserved which proves the above fact. He convened the Fourth Council (1) of the Buddhist monks, the last great assembly of its kind, in Kashmir or Peshawar under the presidency of Vasumitra to settle the disputed points of the Faith, and he himself became the follower of the Mahayana (great way of salvation) School. Buddhism can be divided into two distinct schools;

1) The Hinayana (short way to salvation) School or Southern School adheres to the original faith preached by the Buddha himself, and which still flourishes in Ceylon, Burmah, and Siam; (2) The Mahayana School, or Northern Buddhism, has undergone many changes and has developed into a new religion.

According to this new School the Buddha is looked upon as a divinity—a living saviour, ever present in the hearts of his followers. The Buddhist of this new school adopted the Hindu idea of Yoga also. This new faith finds expression in innumerable images of the Buddha portraying every incident of his life. Before this the Buddhist had not ventured to form an image of their teacher.

But though an ardent Buddhist, Kanishka continued to honour other religions of his vast dominions as well. A curious medley of his coins, decorated with the deities of Hindu, Bactrian, Greek and Persian bears testimony to the fact. Besides Afghanistan, his coins have been discovered from all over his extensive empire. In his coins he calls himself the "King of Gandhara" and "Roanao Rao", that is king of kings. In India his coins have been found in large numbers from Mathura, Sarasvati, Sarnath and Gurakhpur.

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- (1) The First Council was held near Rajagriha shortly after the death of the Buddha, under the presidency of Kasyapa to settle and codify the doctrines of Buddhism. According to the legend three of his disciples were selected to recite from memory the teachings of the Sage, for like Jesus, Gautama had left nothing in writing. He simply taught by personal conversation.

The Second Council was held about a century later under the leadership of Yasa at Vaisali (modern Barah) to correct some of the abuses that had crept into the Church in the march of time.

The Third Council was held at Pataliputra by Asoka, in the eighteenth year of his reign under the presidency of Tissa.

Buddhist art and religion flourished rapidly under the royal patronage. The famous school of sculpture known by the name of the Gandhara or Graeco-Buddhist School also made great progress during this period. The most important innovation of this School is the image of the Buddha. In the Early Indian School, the Buddha is never represented in his bodily form, but his presence is depicted merely by a symbol, such as his throne, footprints, umbrella, or an empty seat under a banyan tree, indicating his enlightenment. The Buddha in his teachings has never emphasised the existence of a creator or of the individual self, but the Mahayana School elevated him in the course of time to the position of a godhead and the saviour of mankind. The Graeco-Buddhist School of Gandhara, strongly impregnated with the influence of classical Greek art, at first started the portrayal of the figure of the Buddha and produced the principal events of his life, as well as the Jataka legends in bas-reliefs with which the stupas were decorated.

Here in Aryana Buddhism absorbed many elements of foreign culture. The primitive Buddhism was a system of practical morals combined with a tender regard for the sanctity of all living creatures. Greek as well as other foreign influences stimulated mythology and imagery, and these sweeping changes had become possible under the patronage of Kanishka. It was under him that the centre of Buddhism shifted from Pataliputra to Gandahara. His patronage to this religion gave a renewed stimulus to the spread of that religion in the vast Kushan empire, whence it found its way to China and other Far Eastern Countries.

Kanishka was a great builder. He adorned his capitals with magnificent buildings and monasteries. In Peshawar, his winter capital, he is said to have built a beautiful Sangharama with a lofty stupa of 150 feet in height, perhaps one of the most magnificent temples of the world. Similarly at Capisi, his summer residence, innumerable monasteries were erected. One of these Shalokia (or Srika Vihara) was built by the Chinese princes kept as hostages by Kanishka in his court. This temple was in a fair state of preservation when Huien Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim, visited the country

in 630 (or 632) A.D. He describes with great satisfaction the wealth and splendour of these monasteries and the innumerable stupas of the Kushan period which dotted the country. The 35 metres statue at Bamiyan, or at least the stupa at its feet which became the core of later Buddhistic buildings in this famous valley, may be ascribed to the efforts of this great king.

Kanishka was a liberal patron of men of letters, and his name is associated with at least a dozen of these literary luminaries, foremost among these being: Ashvaghosha, Vasumitra, Nagarjuna, and Charaka, the last being the well-known court-physician. He also extended his patronage to Agesilaos, the Greek and many other foreigners.

With the rise of the Kushan power in the East and that of the Roman in the West trade with that country received a great stimulus. Trade route, thanks to the vigilance of Kanishka, were now much safer and the luxurious life of the Roman nobles and princes needed products of the East on an unprecedented scale. Fine muslins, pearls and spices from India, and silk from China, were amongst the most highly prized luxuries in Rome. Similarly there was a great demand for foreign goods at the Kushan capitals. A fine collection of these foreign goods comprising Greek and Roman glasswares and Indian ivory plaques are now preserved in the Kabul Museum.

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The Graeco-Buddhist School of Art. We are not quite sure of the beginnings of this famous school of art. According to some writers it originated about the second century B.C. in Gandhara, a name generally applied to the lower valley of the Kabul river, which included the important cities of Purushapura (Peshawar), Pushkalavati (Charsada) and Hadda (near modern Jalalabad), while the districts of Hazara, Rawalpindi, together with Taxila (ancient Takshasila) were also sometimes included in it. Subsequent discoveries by M. Hackin in (1936) at Qunduz (Kohin Diz of the old) and by Russian Archaeo-

logists, Mr. and Mrs. Traiver in the vicinity of Tirmiz, trace the source of the School in Bactria. M. Hackin is perhaps the first scholar to modify his opinion regarding the place of origin of this art. His arguments in support of his opinion are embodied in an article entitled "*L'art Greco-Bactrien et L'art Greco-Bouddhique de la Bactriane*", In this he tries to prove that this art originated in Bactria and developed later on at the end of the first century and at the beginning of the second century A.D., particularly during the reign of Kanishka, at Gandhara.

The characteristic "Gandhara art" was recognized for the first time in 1833-34 when a circular stone relief representing the Buddha was excavated by Dr. Gerad near Kabul. According to him the inception of the School took place during the rule of the Parthians in Gandhara though it was largely influenced by the Bactrian-Greek culture. There is no doubt that the School attained its zenith under the Kushans in the second century A.D., and faded out of existence by the end of the third century.

As we have seen Aryana was the meeting ground of various civilizations. The fusion of Hellenistic and Bactrian ideas took place for the first time in Bactria, shortly after the colonisation of the province by Alexander the Great. It then found its way into India. The artists responsible for the Asokan columns appear to have been trained in the Hellenistic School of Bactria. According to Sir-John Marshall the columns were the handiwork of Bactrian artists. During the next century the same Bactrian School was responsible for the realistic portraits and figures of the kings and divinities of the Indo-Greek coins. Previous to that the Indian coins, punch-marked, as they are generally called, were altogether crude, ugly and out of proportion, having no pretensions, whatsoever, to artistic merits. This contrast between the Indian and Graeco-Bactrian workmanship is also equally apparent in the plastic art of this period. It is not until the advent of the Graeco-Bactrian kings in India (at the beginning of the second century B.C.) that the Graeco-Bactrian influence really begins to make itself felt in the Indian art. This influence manifests itself most prominently in the coinage. The standard weight of the coins is the standard established by the Athens;

the legends are Greek; the types are taken from Greek mythology, and are designated with grace and beauty peculiar to that art.

Later on the Graeco-Bactrian art underwent an inevitable transformation on Indian soil. Bilingual legends, on the one side Greek, on the other Kharoshthi, were substituted for the Greek. Little by little other Greek peculiarities also faded, and Indian elements took their place, which lacked freseness and animation. This process of degeneration continued, more rapidly when the Graeco-Bactrian kings were supplanted by the Scythians. This Graeco-Bactrian influence was not limited to the coins alone, it is also traceable in other minor Indian antiquities of the age, such as gems, terracotta etc.

Under the Scythians, who followed the Greeks in the first century B.C., this influence of foreign elements in the Indian art grew weaker and weaker, and gradually it degenerated into a crude imitation of the Greek forms. But with the coming of the Kushans in the first century A.D. fresh stimulus was given to Hellenistic culture in Eastern Aryana. Gandhara became the centre of a great empire and a meeting ground of various civilizations-Bactrian, Greek, Indian, Buddhist and Iranian. The result was the birth of a new culture that found expression in a new school of art, known by the name of Gandhara or the Graeco-Buddhist School. This School seeks to express Buddhist ideas in Greek forms. The images of Buddha and other deities are modelled after the forms of Greek gods. The drapery and the ornamentations also are the copies of Greek models.

About 400 A.D., there arose another school of art, which gave fresh impetus to the dying elements of the old School. This school, Indo-Afghan as it is called, can be distinguished from the Graeco-Buddhist School in spirit as well as in technique. The materials, too, which the artists employ are quite different. The Gandhara School is using mainly a kind of soft bluish stone called clay-slate or schist, which was quarried from the hills of Swat and Buner.

to the north of the Peshawar District, representing the ancient province of Udayana, while the Indo-Afghan or more properly the Later Gandhara School employs mainly stucco or clay.

The story of the Buddha's life was the principal theme of these two schools. It may be remembered that in the earlier Indian schools the Buddha is never represented in human form; his presence is indicated merely by symbols. In Gandhara, however, we are for the first time face to face with his human representations. The head of the Gandhara Buddha is fashioned like that of Appolo, and in the standing posture he is always robed in a thick garment reaching his knees. The folds of the cloth are indicated by horizontal and parallel curves in relief, resembling the Roman toga.

The earliest dateable representation of the Buddha occurs on a casket found inside the relic chamber at Bimaran in Afghanistan, where it was deposited along with some freshly minted copper coins of Azes II (end of the first century B.C.). The second representation appears on another casket found from the stupa of Shahhi-ki-dheri, belonging to the reign of Kanishka the Great.

HUVISHKA (c.160-182 A.D.). Kanishka was succeeded by his son, Huvishka, who was the Viceroy of India during his father's reign. Unfortunately the events of his reign are not clear to us. It is probable that he ruled for a period of twenty to twenty-five years. Some are of the opinion that after the death of Kanishka his vast empire was divided among his two sons -Vasishka, and Huvishka, but of the former no coins have so far been discovered. The coinage of Huvishka, like that of his father, exhibits a medley of deities, but he seems to have been inclined to Hinduism, and worshipped Shiva and Vishnu.

VASUDEVA (c. 182-220 A.D.). Huvishka was followed by his son, Vasudeva. The break-up of the Kushan empire begins with his reign. In Afghanistan petty kingdoms arose on all sides, some of which continued to reign independently in different parts



Bamiyan : Wall Painting



Kabal Museum: Funlukista Room, women
in water pool 67th Century

Woman: Wall Painting

of the country until the invasion of the Ephthalites, which commenced in the fifth century A.D. Some of the smaller principalities even survived thereafter in the mountain fastness of the country, especially in the eastern districts, until the invasions of the Arabs (7th century A. D.). Vasudeva, too, seems to have been of Hindu inclination and his coins exhibit Hindu deities, such as Shiva and Nana. He is said to have reigned for a quarter of a century. He lost his hold on Aryana, and had to be content with his Indian possessions. His death occurred probably in 220 A.D., and from this time onward the Kushan power declined rapidly.

We do not know clearly the causes that led to this hasty break-up of the Kushan Empire. The rise of the Sassanian power in the west may possibly be attributed as one of its chief causes. Another cause which led to the downfall of the Kushan power in Aryana was undoubtedly the increased interests of the last Kushan kings in Indian affairs, leaving the country an easy prey to the Ephthalites and various other nomadic Turkish tribes, such as Juan Juan and Tukieu.

THE KIDARA DYNASTY.- After the break-up of the Kushan power, Kidara, one of the Kushan princes, was able to establish an independent kingdom in Aryana with Bactria as its capital. It so appears, however, that he could not keep his hold on that province for long, and had to be content with the southern portion of his dominions, that is Gandhara. He then shifted his capital to Peshawar.

Meanwhile the Sassanians, availing themselves of the disruption of the Kushan Empire were able to lay their hands on Aeria and Bactria, while the north-eastern parts of the country fell in to the hands of the Ephthalites and Turkish tribes, and from here begins a rivalry for power in Aryana between the Sassanians and the Ephthalites.

The history of this period is by no means clear. According to Chinese sources Kidara was followed by his son Kunkhas, and he in his turn was succeeded by Piro. The last king of this line was probably Varahran.

CHAPTER 12.

The Ephthalites.

The Ephthalites are known to us by various names. The Persians and the Arabs called them Haptal, Hayatal and Hethal; the Greeks named them Ephthalites, while the Romans used to call them white Huns. There is also much controversy as regard their origin. Some look upon them as a branch of the Yellow Race, while others contend that they were Aryans, as their language is decisively Indo-European.

According to the Chinese sources the original home of the Ephthalites (Hoa or Hoatun as they call them) was the country north of the great wall of China. They were first subjugated by a Turkish tribe, Juan Juan by name. Shortly afterwards they were able to assert their independence. Gradually gaining power they were in a position to turn their attention to foreign conquests. Passing through Khotan (Chinese Turkestan) in their westward movement, they entered Aryana in about 425 A.D. and within a short time they were able to establish a powerful empire extending from the Caspian Sea to Khotan. This brought them into clash with the Sassanian Empire of Persia. Bahram Gur (420-440 A.D.), the Persian monarch, appointing Narse, his brother, as regent behind, came to meet the Ephthalites at the head of a formidable force. A battle ensued near Merv. The Ephthalites were defeated and their king, probably Ifathilito, was slain, and his crown fell into the hands of Bahram, which he presented to the fire-temple of Bactria.

Shortly after, during the reign of Yazdigird II (440-457 A.D.) the Ephthalites, repairing their losses, were in a position to assume offen-

sive once more. This time they inflicted a crushing defeat on the Persians. The Ephthalite king who led the expedition was probably Mehrpur, who was able to regain the lost provinces.

Yazdigird, dying shortly afterwards, was succeeded by his son Firoz. By this time Akhshnur (Khushnawaz of the Persian writers) had come to power in Aryana. Firoz, who owed his throne to the assistance of Akhshnur, proving ungrateful, declared war on his benefactor. But he had soon to repent his folly, for being defeated he was forced to sue for terms. He gave his daughter in marriage to Akhshnur and promised to pay tribute and war indemnity, leaving his son, Kubad, as hostage behind, for the faithful discharge of the terms of treaty.

Shortly afterwards, Firoz, violating the peace treaty, launched a second attack. The Persian army was totally annihilated, while Firoz himself was among the slain. This gave Akhshnur an opportunity to divert his attention in other directions. Crossing the Hindu Kush he took Capisia, Kabul, Ghazni, Pactia, and the whole of Gandhara (c. 465 A. D.).

One of the Ephthalite tribes, Zabul or Zawal by name, settled in Ghazni. Henceforth the district came to be known as Zabulistan, that is the country of zabuls. Toramana and his son, Mihirakula, who came to power one after the other and extended their way to the very heart of India, belonged to this tribe.

Akhshnur, whose capital was Tokhari, on the Oxus, dying shortly afterwards, was succeeded by his Viceroy (or Tagin), Toramana, a remarkable warrior, who in the space of a short time created an extensive empire in Northern and Central India. Toraman's conquest of India began probably in the beginning of the sixth century. At this time India was governed by a powerful king of the Gupta dynasty, Skandagupta by name. But the magnificent fabric of the Gupta Empire built up by the genius of Samudragupta and

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Vikramaditya could not sustain the onslaught of the Ephthalites led by their brave leader, Toramana. After an initial victory, Skandagupta sustained defeat after defeat, and by 500 A.D. Toramana was able to shatter the military organisation of the Guptas and to wrest the whole of Northern and Central India with its capital at Malwa. He thus became the acknowledged paramount power of India. But Toramana did not live long to enjoy the fruits of his victory, dying in 502 A.D. he was succeeded by his son Mihirakula.

MIHIRAKULA (c. 502-542 A.D.). Mihirakula, the last king of this dynasty was a blood-thirsty tyrant, and massacred a large number of the Buddhist monks and destroyed their monasteries. He had two capitals; one at Sakala (present Sialkot), the other at Balkh, while his military headquarters were at Bamian, in the Hindukush. In the beginning of his reign he added Kashmir to his dominions, and then led his expeditions in other directions. It is said that he levied tribute from forty countries extending from the frontiers of Persia to Khotan, on the border of China. Malwa was ruled by a prince of this line; while Valabhai and other kingdoms in its vicinity were tributary to Mihirakula. His cruelty and oppression, however, gradually alienated the hearts of his subjects from him, who were forced to take up arms against him. In 532 A.D. under the leadership of Yasodharman, they defeated Mihirakula and made him a prisoner. Later on he was released, perhaps by the intercession of his mother. Driven out of the plains of northern India, he retired to the valley of Kashmir, where he remained until his death (in 542 A.D.).

His death shattered the fabric of the Ephthalite Empire and involved Aryana in confusion and anarchy. A few of the petty Ephthalite chiefs maintained their independence for some time in the various parts of the country. But they were absorbed gradually in the local populace like the Greeks and other foreign elements. (1)

(1) It is believed that the Rajputs of Central India and some other tribes in Western India are their descendants.

Meanwhile the Kushans, who, on the approach of the Ephthalites, had taken to their mountain fastness, came out of their strongholds, and succeeded in establishing independent principalities in different parts of the country, such as Zabul (or Ghazni), Capisia, Bamian, Jaghori (in Hazarajat), Badghis, Gurjistan, Badakhshan, and Fundiqistan (north of Kabul). It so appears that these petty Kushan chiefs, seeing themselves menaced by formidable foes (the Sassanians and the Turks) from two sides joined hands with the Ephthalites, and made common cause with them. It is for this reason that these local dynasties have come to be known by the name of Kushano-Ephthalites. A large number of their coins have been discovered from Deh Mozang (near Kabul) Rezah Kohistan, Ghazni Fundiqistan, and Kakrak Pass (near Bamian). Huien Tsang, the well-known Chinese pilgrim, who visited the country in the early part of the 7th. century, speaks of some of these local chiefs, who still held their own against heavy pressure from the north and west. At this time a new foe had also appeared on the scene.

The Turks, under their great leader, Istami had by now attained great power in Central Asia, and threatened to wipe out Aryana altogether. Simultaneous with their raids, Nausherwan, the Sassanid, king, also invaded Afghanistan (about 566 A.D.), and occupied Seistan, Balkh and Aeria. Not content with these, he cast longing eyes on the southern and eastern provinces of the country as well.

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CHAPTER 13. THE TURKS.

The Turks that pounced upon Aryana by the middle of the sixth century A.D. are known to us by the names of Tu Chueh, Durko, Turkut, Toukieus, and Assena. They were a branch of the great

Hioang-nu (or Huns). Their original home was the province of Irklij, somewhere near the Altai mountains. About 533 A.D. they were attacked by the third emperor of the Wei dynasty and driven to the borders of the Juan Juan country, whom they served as smiths for some time. Shortly afterwards a battle ensued between these two Turkish tribes, which terminated in the total annihilation of the Juan Juan. Flushed with victory, the Turks under their chief Tumen advanced, westward, and took the fertile valleys of the Tarim and the Jaxartes. They then entered Aryanna, and were soon in a position to establish their authority on all the territories from Mongolia to the Black Sea (c.553 A.D.).

Tumen did not live long to reap the fruits of his victories, and after his death his vast empire was divided between his two sons, namely Mouhan and Istami. Mouhan got the eastern portion of the Empire, while the western part fell to the lot of the younger brother, Istami. The former called himself Khaqan while the latter took the title of Yabghu, though he, too, is sometimes called by the name of Khaqan.

Istami, who became the master of the western part of his father empire, is also the leader of the western Turks. In about 554 A.D. he entered into an alliance with Nausherwan of Persia. In a joint campaign against the Ephthalites, whose power was on the wane, they won a signal victory. As a result of that the Turks took the whole of north-eastern part of Aryana, while the Persians laid their hands on two of its most fertile provinces, that is Aeria and Bactria.

To cement this alliance Nausherwan married the daughter of the Yabghu. Their cordial relations, however, did not last long, as each was jealous of the growing influence of the other. The Yabghu despatched an embassy to the Court of Byzantium, and prevailed upon Justin II to attack Persia from the west. But Justin had soon repent for his folly as the Roman army sustained two crushing defeats at the hands of Nausherwan at Nisibi and Dara, (573 A.D.). The death of Nausherwan in 579 encouraged the Turks to launch an attack on Persia from the east. But they, too, were utterly

defeated at the hands of Bahram Chobeen, a Persian general of great renown. Yabghu was killed in the engagement, while his son was made a prisoner (588 A.D.).

In 630 A.D. when Huien-Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim, on his way to India, reached Aryana, he met Tung, the chief of the Western Turks on the shore of the Issik-Kul (Hot-water Lake). Yabghu at this time, profiting by the war that was going on between Persia and Byzantium, extended his influence south of the Hindukush as far as Gandhara. His son, Tardushad or (Tardu-chad) was ruling at Kunduz, when Huien-Tsang passed that way. At the instigation of Taginshah (Tardushad), the Chinese pilgrim visited Balkh, which according to him was included in the dominions of the king of Kunduz. In spite of the ravages caused by the Ephthalites at Balkh, it was still a flourishing town, having no less than 100 monasteries, rich in relics of the Buddha and inhabited by three thousand monks. The famous Buddhist Sangharamah, Nava Vihara (popularly known as Nao-Bahr) was still intact.

The days of the Western Turks were however, umbered, for hardly had the Chinese pilgrim left their territories, when the people of Balkash rose in rebellion. As a result of this revolt Tung was assassinated and his vast empire broke up into two rival Khanates. Their weakness and mutual jealousies gave China a chance to extend her influence further west in the heart of Asia. Tai-tusung, the Chinese Emperor, took Turfan in 640 A.D., Kotcha, and Karajar in 648, and by 649, the year of his death, he had reached as far as the Pamirs and Transoxiana. But in Kunduz the Turks were able to hold their own, till the arrival of Qutaiba, the famous Arab general (beginning of the 8th Century). This dynasty was known to the Arab writers by the name of Tagin Shahi or Tajin Shahi.

CHAPTR 14.

The Kushano-Ephthalite Dynasties.

We have seen in the previous Chapter that the Toukieu Turks did not penetrate far into Aryana, and were content with their possessions north of the Hindukush. Only once we hear of them to have extended their sphere of influence to the confines of Gandhara. But their success in that direction appears to be of a very short duration as no mention is made of them again in the country south of the Hindukush. Similarly the Sassanians, in spite of their best efforts, were unable to touch the core of the country, where after the break-up of the Ephthalite Empire about a dozen independent principalities had come into being.

These petty dynasties are known to us by the general name of Kushano-Ephthalites. It is a pity that this part of the Afghan history is by no means very clear to us, and there is such a divergence of opinion among the historians that we are not in a position to write a connected story of this long period of over two centuries and a half. The information obtained from these various sources is meager and at the same time the writers differ from one another not only in the names of rulers and dynasties but even in the narration of some important events.

The Rathils or (Tagin-Shahan). Huien Tsang, who visited the country in the early part of the 7th. century A. D., speaks of the local independent principalities at Bamian, Capisia (the Chin-pin of the Chinese) and Jaghori (in Hazarajat). It is gathered from his writings that the ruler of Capisia, whom he met at his summer capital (Capisi) during his sojourns in about 632 A. D. was not a Turk, as the Arab and some of the early Muslim historians have thought him to be, but a member of the well-known Kashitriya (Warrior) Caste, and that he had two capitals; one at Capisi, north of Kabul, and the second at Udhanbhandā (Und,

Walband, Ghazni, or Uwand) near Kabul. The king of Capota, named



Kabul Museum. Bamiyan-Room, Wall Painting, showing
The Hunter King 7th century.



Bamiyan: Wall-Painting of Moon God, Covering the Roof of the Nich of the Buddah of 35meters.

Waihand, Ohind, or Uwand) near Attock. The king of Capisia, according to the same source, held sway over the whole of Eastern and Southern Afghanistan, from D.I. Khan and the Waziri country to Arachosia and the Seistan Lake. He was in possession of no less than ten principalities, foremost among these being : Lanpu (Lampaka or Laghman), Nagarahara (modern Jalalabad), Gandhara (lower Kabul valley) and Takshacila (Taxila). He was a brave, intelligent and benevolent king and loved his subjects dearly, and was very popular with them. He was a devout Buddhist and was delighted to entertain the Chinese pilgrim as an honourable guest. On his return from India (c. 644 A.D.) Huien-Tsang met the same ruler again at Und, his winter head-quarters, and was again honourably received and entertained.

According to Chinese sources the first king of this line was Hing - ye, who ruled in the beginning of the eight century A.D. probably from 719 to 739. He was entitled Tele, Telete or Tekin. Al-Biruni, the great Mohammedian traveller, philosopher and geographer, calls this ruling dynasty by the name of Furkan Shahi, Turkin Shahi or Tagin Shahi, while the Arabs put it as Ratbils, Zaibals or Rantbils. Again according to al-Biruni the first king of this line was Beratagin and the last Lakaturman, who was cruel and dissipated. This led to his ruin, for his chief minister, Kalar, an influential Brahman, putting himself at the head of a popular rising, succeeded in imprisoning and dethroning the king, probably in 850 A.D. Kalar usurping the throne laid the foundation of a new dynasty which has come to be known by the names of Brahman Shahi, Kabul Shahi, Hindu Shahi or Rayans of Kabul. The Ratbils professed Buddhism, while the Brahman Shahs were Hindus and worshipped Shiva and other Hindu deities.

We do not know when the Ratbils were forced to quit their capital at Capisi and shift to Kabul. According to Wou-kong, another Chinese pilgrim, who visited Gandhara between 751-769 A.D., Capisi was still the seat of the local government and a flourishing town.

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Probably this state of affairs continued until 793 A.D. when Ibrahim ibn Jabal, under orders from Fazal bin Yahya, governor of Khurasan, led an expedition against Capisia via the Ghorband valley. It is said that during this raid Capisi, the Royal City, sustained irreparable loss and was literally wiped out of existence. This made the Ratbils to shift their capital to Kabul. There is again difference of opinion as regard the original site of this historical town. Probably the old city of Kabul lay to the south of the modern capital on the river Lohgar, somewhere near the present village of Shivaki. Kabul continued to be the seat of government both of the Ratbils and later on of the Kabul Shahans till 871 A.D., when Yakub bin Laith, founder of the Saffarid dynasty took it and destroyed its temples. The seat of government was then shifted to Gardez, where a fresh wave of invasion under directions of Amro bin Laith, Yakub's brother, made the Kabul Shahi to quit Gardez and move east towards Uhind, and from there a little later the capital was shifted to the interior of the Punjab.

THE BRAHMAN SHAHAN or KABUL SHAHAN.- Kalar is the first king of this line, but we do not know much about his life. He was followed by Santa Deva, or Sri Samanta Deva as he styles himself on his coins. It was during his reign that Yakub bin Laith invaded Kabul and forced Santa Deva to move south and make Gardez the seat of his government.

The third king of this line was Kamla or Kalnu. It was in his days that Amro bin Laith directed an expedition against him and as a result of that Sakawand, the fine temple of the Lohgar valley, fell into the hands of the Muslims, and the seat of Kabul Shahi government was Shifted from Gardez to Uhind.

The fourth king of this dynasty was Bhim Pal. In his coins he calls himself Bhima Deva or Sri Bhima. He ruled between 782 and 950.

The fifth king of the Kabul Shahi was Ishtpal or Rai Jaipal, who was contemporary to Sabuktigin of Gahzni. His kingdom extended from Lahgman in the west to Satlaj in the east, and from Kashmir in the north to Multan in the south. It was he, who, alarmed at the establishment of a powerful Muslim kingdom to his close vicinity in Gnazni, took up arms against the Ghaznavids, and from here a series of war took place between the Ghaznavids, and the Brahman Shahan, which ultimately resulted in the complete ruin of the latter dynasty.

The Coming of Islam.- In 622 the Arabian Prophet Hazrat Mohammad was forced to leave Mecca and take refuge in Madina. Hardly a century had elapsed when Palestine, Syria, Egypt and the whole of Northern Africa, and even the distant Spain and Southern France, had been brought under the banner of Islam. In the east, too, the warriors of Islam succeeded in reducing Persia, Baluchistan, Sindh and a great part of Central Asia.

By 644 A.D. the Arabs penetrated to the vicinity of Kabul, but had to fall back, as here they met the severest resistance they had experienced so far. No nation or race has shown more dauntless courage or more indomitable energy than the Afghans in their wars with the Arabs. The Arabs attacked Kabul no less than six times, but all their efforts were frustrated and each time they had to fall back after sustaining heavy losses, and Kabul remained in the hand of Kabul Shahan until 871 A.D. when it was reduced by Yakub bin Laith.

It was in 645 that Yazdigird III of Persia, after his repeated setbacks at the hands of the Arabs, took refuge in Khurasan. A contingent of 20,000 Arabs led by Ahnif bin Qais followed him into that country.

In the battle that took place near Merv, Yazdigird and Khaqan, his colleague, sustained a crushing defeat. The unfortunate monarch fleeing from the field of battle, came to Tukharistan and appealed

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to China to assist him in his struggle against the Arabs. But the Chinese emperor, was in no mood to send his forces to such long distances. In his de-pair the Persian monarch came to Balkh. Abnif availing of the opportunity, led a second expedition against him. A battle took place in the vicinity of Balkh. Once more Yazdigird was defeated and forced to seek safety in flight. He took refuge in the Murghab basin, while his son Firoz fled to China.

In 652, during the Caliphate of H. Usman, Abdullah bin Amir, one of the famous Arab generals, led an expedition into Khurasan. He made Nishapur his military head-quarters, and from there he sent expeditionary forces in various directions. One of these under Rabi bin Zayad came towards Herat, and a second under Abdur Raman bin Samarah made for Seistan. Abdur Rahman besieged and finally captured Zaranj (now Zahidan). From Seistan as his advance base Abdur Rahman advanced into Zamindawar. Here in a temple devoted to the sun-god at Zur (or Zuz) he got an idol of gold with ruby eyes (653 A.D.).

Amir Moawiyah, after restoring peace, again appointed Abdullah ibn Amir governor of Khurasans. By this time Herat and Balkh had reasserted their independence. Abdullah, after reducing the cities in retaliation issued orders for the demolition of the famous shrine of Naobahar at Balkh.

In 706, however, the great Muslim conqueror Qutaiba entered Merv and called upon its inhabitants to unite in a Jihad or Holy War against non-believers. He advanced as far as the borders of Chinese Turkestan. In 709 Niazak, prince of Badghis, raised the standard of revolt. He sent his treasures for safe keeping to the king of Kabul, and attempted to unite all the local rulers against the Arabs. But he failed in his attempt and the rising did not take the form of a national upheaval. It was therefore easily put down, and Niazak, who had surrendered on terms, was executed.

In 682 A.D. Yazid bin Zaiyad with his brother Buobaidah led an expedition against Kabul. It was a complete failure. In the battle that ensued the Arabs met a severe defeat, and a large number of them were either killed in the action or taken prisoners. Yazid himself fell fighting, while his brother was imprisoned. The Caliph was forced to pay half a million Dinars to the king of Kabul as a ransom for his army. Shortly afterwards a second expedition under Abdul Aziz ibn Abdullah for the same purpose, had to fall back after sustaining heavy losses both in men and materials.

When Abdul Malik became Caliph, he appointed Hajjaj bin Yusuf governor of the east. Hajjaj equipped another expedition under Abdullah to take Kabul. It is said that the king of Kabul was ready to pay a million Dirham if Abdullah would give up his expedition and return to his base. But Abdullah puffed up by his recent success into an overweening confidence in his own abilities, both as a soldier and as a statesman, rejected the offer. The king of Kabul did not think it advisable to meet this grand army in the open field. Falling back on his capital, he destroyed the villages enroute, so that the enemy should not be able to get provisions for his large army on his way to Kabul. When the Arabs reached the hilly part of the country, they found their retreat cut off. Abdullah realising his folly sued for peace. He was allowed to return on payment of three hundred thousand Dinars, and the pledge that he would not meddle with the affairs of the King of Kabul any more. Hajjaj, on hearing these humiliating terms, disavowing the treaty, dismissed Abdullah, and appointed Musa Ibn Talha in his place.

In 698 Obaidullah ibn Abi Bakr came with a large force towards Kabul. The king of Kabul again took to his old tactics. When Obaidullah reached the hilly tract of his country, he suddenly found himself cut off from his base. He was therefore forced to make good his escape on payment of seven hundred thousand Dinars.

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In 700 A.D. Hajjaj sent a third contingent of 10,000 force under Abdur Rahman ibn Ashas to reduce Kabul. The king of Kabul was again willing to pay annual tribute if his country was spared. But the offer was rejected. The same tactics were again resorted to. When winter set in, Abdur Raman found out that further advance was suicidal. He wrote to Hajjaj in this respect, requesting him to postpone further advance till spring. Hajjaj reprimanded Abdur Rahman of his cowardice, whereupon Abdur Rahman rebelling, made peace with Kabul Shah, and returned with all haste to Basra to punish Hajjaj for his impudency. In the battle that ensued Abdur Rahman was defeated and he had to seek safety in flight.

He took refuge with the king of Kabul, but died shortly afterwards. This was perhaps the last attempt of the Arabs in this direction, and Kabul remained in the hands of the Kabul Shahi until the end of the eight century A.D., when it was reduced by Yakub bin Laith.

After the death of Harun-ur-Rashid in 806 A.D. the Abbaside Empire could not maintain its integrity. The provincial governors founded dynasties owing nominal allegiance to the Caliph but virtually independent. The first to assert his independence was Tahir of Khurasan, who laid the foundation of the Tahirids in Herat. They were succeeded in 872 by the Saffarids. The founder of this short-lived dynasty was Yakub, a brazier of Seistan, who became a military adventurer of much celebrity. The Saffarids, in their turn, were subdued by the Samanids of Bukhara in 903 A.D., a dynasty which continued to exist in the heart of Asia for about 120 years. The fifth prince of this line, Abdul Malik, had a Turkish slave, Alaptagin by name. He was appointed the governor of Khurasan. On the death of Abdul Malik, his patron (in 961 A.D.), the chief officers of the State assembled to nominate a successor.

Alaptagin voted against Mansur, the minor son of the deceased Sultan. He nevertheless, ascended the throne by securing the majority of votes in his favour.

When Alaptagin finding his life in danger escaped to Ghazni, an outlying province, where aided by the warlike Afghans, he was able to throw off the yoke of the Samanids and lay the foundation of the famous Ghaznavid dynasty.

Alaptagin was succeeded by his son Ishaq, on whose death Mansur of Bukhara acknowledged Balkatagin, a former slave of Alaptagin, as ruler of Ghazni. Balkatagin was succeeded by Pirai in 972. It was during the reign of this prince that the first conflict between the Brahman Shahis and Ghaznavids took place, the former being the aggressors.

Jaipal, whose dominions extended to the Hindukush in the west, was alarmed by the establishment of a powerful kingdom in his vicinity. He resolved to nip it in the bud. At the head of a large force he crossed the Indus and came as far as Laghman. Sabuktagin, who had succeeded Pirai in 977, was keenly watching the movements of his opponent. He marched to meet him (983 A.D.). Before the armies engaged, a violent storm broke out at night, which so disheartened the superstitious Hindus, that Jaipal sued for peace. According to the treaty signed Jaipal agreed to give up fifty fighting-elephants and pay a large sum of money as indemnity. However, on reaching Lahore, his capital, he not only refused to carry out the terms of the agreement, but instigated by his Brahman counsellors, imprisoned the Sultan's envoys, who had come to receive the indemnity. This breach of faith on the part of the Indian prince could not be tolerated by the Sultan, who at once made up his mind to enforce the terms. He left for his eastern border at the head of a large force.

Jaipal, who by now had fully realised the strength and ability of his opponent, invoked the help of the Indian princes. The response was encouraging, and all sent their quotas. Very soon the Raja found himself at the head of a large and well-equipped force, 100,000 horse, and an immense body of infantry. Jaipal marched

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northwards full assured of his victory. Once more fortune favoured Sabuktagin, and the Indian army was routed with great slaughter. But Sabuktagin did not follow his beaten foe into the Panjab, and was content with the possession of the Peshawar plain. This was the end of the Kabul Shahis rule in Afghanistan.

Sabuktagin, for the rest of his life, was busy in leading expeditions in other directions of his dominions. After a reign of twenty years he died at Tirmiz in 997 A.D. in the 56th year of his age. His body was taken to Ghazni and interred there. He was succeeded by Mahmud, who after deposing a younger brother, ascended the throne in 999 A.D. The illustrious career of this Sultan and his Indian expeditions fall outside the scope of the present volume.



CHRONOLOGY OF IMPORTANT EVENTS

- c.3000 B.C. First Aryans' settlement at Bakhdi (modern Balkh).
- c.2,500-1500 B.C. General migration of the Aryans from Northern Afghanistan to India, Media, Fars and other parts of the world.
- c.2,000-1,400 B.C. Composition of the Rigvedic hymns.
- c.1,000 B. C. Death of Spitama Zorathustra, popularly known as Zardusht or Zoroaster, whom most of the classical and oriental writers concur in designating as a native of Balkh.
- B.C.745-725. Tiglath-Pilser II of Assyria extends his empire to Arakosia (modern Kandahar).
- B.C.577. Birth of Siddharta or Gautama Sakyamuni, the Buddha, in India.
- B.C.549. Cyrus (Kaikhusro) the founder of the Achaemenids, attacks Aryana.
- 518 B.C. Darius Hystaspes, king of Persia, ventures further eastwards than Cyrus, and conquers the right bank of the Indus.
- 334.BC. Alexander the Great launches his Attack and crosses the Hellespont into Asia Minor.
- 333 B.C. The defeat of Darius at Issus.
331. B.C. The battle of Gagumela or Arbela and the collapse of the Achaemenian Empir.

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330 B.C. Alexander enters Aria (modern Herat).

326 B.C. Alexander crosses the Indus into India.

323 B.C. Death of Alexander at Babylonia.

320 B.C. Chandra Gupta, surnamed Maurya, lays the foundation of a powerful empire in Northern India.

305-302 B.C. Seleucus Nicator concludes a treaty of friendship with Chandragupta, by which he surrenders the whole of Southern Afghanistan to the Indian monarch.

272 B.C. Accession of Asoka.

210 B.C. Bactria and Parthia assert their independence. Diodotus, the governor of Bakh, lays the foundation of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom at Bakhdi (Balkh).

232 B.C. Death of Asoka the great and the break-up of the Mauryan Empire.

C. 227-189 B.C. Euthydemus conspires against Diodotus II and killing him ascends the throne.

212 B.C. Antiochus III appears in the east to reassert the Seleucid supremacy over the revolted kingdoms of Parthia and Bactria.

c. 189-167. Demetrius the Invincible extends his empire as far as Pataliputra (modern Patna).

135 B.C. Heliocles, son of Eucratides, is defeated at the hands of the Sakas and comes to Capisia, where he lays the foundation of a new kingdom destined to last for another century.

140-130 B.C. The Yueh-che occupy the whole of Northern Afghanistan.

85-80 B.C. Maues, the Scythian king, conquers Taxila.

c.35 B.C. Conquest of Kabul by Gondophernes.

c.40 to 75 A. D. Kadphises conquers Kabul, Gandhara and Taxila

78-110 A.D. Vima Kadphises rules Afghanistan and northern India.

c.120-160 A.D. Kanishka the Great rules over Central Asi

220-425 A.D. A period of chaos and anarchy.

425 A.D. The- invasions of the Ephthalites begin.

405-411 A.D. Fa-Hien, the Chinese pilgrim visits India.

553- 649 A.D. The Western Turks or Toukieus establish themselves in Northern Afghanistan

529 to 645. A.D. Hsuan-Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim visits Afghanistan.



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235 B.C. Conquest of Kabul by Diodotus.
240 to 75 A.D. Kushan conquests Kabul, Gandhara and
Tajikistan.

75-110 A.D. Yima Kashgaria rules Afghanistan and northern India.

120-130 A.D. Kushan rules the Great Kush over Central Asia.

230-435 A.D. A period of chaos and anarchy.

435 A.D. The invasion of the Hephthalites begins.

405-411 A.D. Fa-Hien, the Chinese pilgrim visits India.

525-540 A.D. The Western Turks in India establish
themselves in Northern Afghanistan.

520 to 645 A.D. Hsuan Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim visits Afghanistan.





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